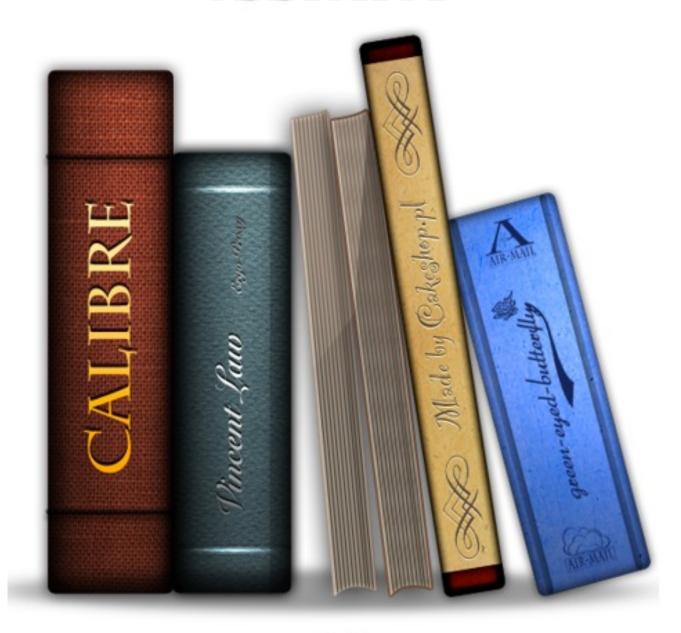
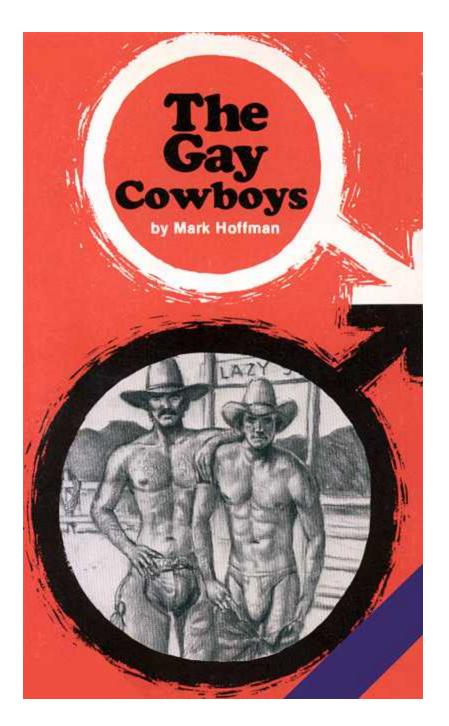
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AC-233 THE GAY COWBOYS by Mark Hoffman

FOREWORD

It has been noted by psychologists that man is a gregarious creature whose need for affection and acceptability is as strong a motivation as his need for

food and shelter. Approval is a social need that is reflected many times over in our everyday lives.

Frequently, however, one's need for approval and acceptance undergoes a serious challenge, especially in those instances where behavior reflects a departure from what sociologists would consider the norm.

THE GAY COWBOYS chronicles just such a challenge. Wade Marsh and Joe Horn, adventurous, rugged cowboys, have developed a physical attraction to one another, yet it is only through a series of harrowing events that they will finally be able to understand the true measure of their attraction.

THE GAY COWBOYS -- An unusual and revealing story that holds a lesson for society.

The Publisher

CHAPTER ONE

"Hot damn!" Wade Marsh exclaimed. "Water!"

Half a mile away across the rolling plains was a twisting stand of cottonwoods, lush and green in contrast to the parched grass. Wade's horse wickered, his ears twitching, nostrils firing.

"About time." Joe Horn muttered. "Been drinkin' sweat fer two days."

They kicked their horses into an easy trot, keeping them reined in to prevent a gallop. The horses were as dry as their owners.

The water ran knee-deep, the banks low, the cottonwoods branching over the stream and making a cool bower. Wade jumped from his saddle and sprawled on the bank, slurping water, as greedily as his horse.

"Ya wanna flounder that nag?" Joe asked, his voice raspy.

Wade rose and jerked the gelding's head out of the stream. "Sorry," he muttered, wiping his face on his sleeve. "Forgot."

Wade was nineteen, six feet tall, lean and hard from working as a cowboy the past few years. An orphan since he was fourteen, when his father died in Vietnam, he'd been living with a cousin who owned a Texas panhandle ranch. There'd been no love lost between them and Wade had worked hard in the intervening years.

After watering and hobbling his mare, Joe drank his fill. Wade admired Joe, his discipline and his knowledge of animals and the wilds. Without him, Wade realized, they wouldn't have made it across that stretch of sand they'd stumbled into two days ago. They'd parked their rusty, old pick-up truck and the double horse trailer off a dead-end track and taken off on a jaunt across Indian reservation lands as a lark. They had intended no more than an overnight camping trip until they wandered into this desert.

"I'm gonna take a swim," Wade announced, his eyes feasting on the coolness of the stream and the shade of the cottonwoods.

"Good idea," Joe said. "Get the sand outta my gullet and outta my asshole."

Wade laughed, stripping quickly. "That can't be too comfortable, Joe."

"It ain't!" Joe grinned, laugh lines spreading around his gray eyes. He began stripping.

Joe was twenty-five, shorter than Wade by two inches, but more muscular.

He was broad shouldered and lean-hipped. A drifter, he had met Wade three months before when he'd signed on for a major round up at Wade's cousin's ranch. The two of them had hit it off. At the end of the round up, Joe had suggested they team up and see the country, and Wade had readily agreed. He had nothing to keep him at the ranch, or anywhere else. A nightlong session at a local motel had sealed the bargain.

Tossing his soiled, black broad-brim hat atop his jeans, Joe turned in time to see Wade, bare-assed, step into the stream. Joe sucked air between his teeth. Wade's lanky physique, his lean, hard ass and heavy-headed cock, were exciting to watch.

"C'mon, Joe," Wade said, looking back and grinning.

Despite the years of working outdoors, Wade still had a boyish look. His curly black hair was worn long, like Joe wore his. His square face was dominated by green-flecked hazel eyes surrounded by thick black lashes.

His chest was hairless, with large copper colored nipples that seemed to be permanently hard.

With a whoop, Joe dashed for the stream diving and pulling a surprised Wade into the water with him. Thankfully, the bottom was sandy. They landed sooty with a big splash.

"Goddamn you!" Wade bellowed, fighting out of Joe's grip, laughing. "Wawanna drown me?"

Joe released Wade. "Naw, cowboy. Somethin' else, maybe?"

Wade grinned. Sgt. O'Malley, who'd been Wade's temporary guardian during the period between his father's death and his arrival at his cousin's ranch, had been his first lover. He hadn't had sexual contact of any kind until that night with Joe in the motel. Wade felt his balls stir and warm and his spirit begin to soar. Joe was someone he admired, trusted, and desired.

"Somethin' else, huh?" Wade shot back, splashing water at Joe's face.

"You and what army, mister?"

"Oh, now he's ready to take on an Army. Shit, you get 'em trained, and they up and leave ya."

Wade's pulse was racing, his cock becoming hard. "Who's trained, huh?"

Wade flew through the air, tackling Joe and puffing him under. They wrestled, each arousing the other, oath gaining only momentary advantage.

They were a match for each other. Joe was more experienced and that began to tell. Panting, Joe got Wade into a half nelson sad pressed the young cowboy down onto the grassy bank, straddling his hips.

Joe's thick, long cock was hard. He looked down. His balls were pressing against Wade's white ass. His cock jerked up and down. Warmth spread through his loins like liquid fife. He released Wade's arm and stretched out on top of him, a soft, low moan in his throat.

"Damn, cowboy," Wade rasped, "but you sure do have a big one."

"You, too," Joe replied, rolling off and pulling Wade around to face him.

The young man grinned, his work roughened hand grasped Joe's hard-on.

"But not this big."

"Aw, hell, I only gotcha by an inch."

Passion flared within Wade's chat, almost painfully. His eyes focused on Joe's generous mouth, the thick brown mustache. Quickly, he crushed his lips against Joe's. They strained their bodies against each other. Their cocks pressed together between their bellies. Wade gasped Joe's ass with one hand while shoving his tongue into the cowboy's mouth. Joe groaned and humped against Wade's prick.

Wade broke the embrace, his tongue trailing down Joe's neck, and downward, licking at the light chest hair, seeking and claiming one of Joe's hard, puckered nipples.

"Awww," Joe sighed as Wade sucked his tit. "Jeez, that's great, cowboy!

Suck 'em! Yeah, suck 'em, hard, man!"

Joe had explained some of the facts of life to Wade concerning man-to-man sex. Then he had demonstrated each fact. One was that man's nipples were sensitive and erotic.

Wade moved his body, shoving Joe's legs apart with his knees and knelt between them. His hands roamed over Joe's body while his mouth worked on the cowboy's nipples. Joe's cock jerked and spasmed.

"Aw, cowboy," Joe moaned, his hands running over Wade's shoulders. "Suck my cock. I'm about to bust."

Quickly, Wade scrunched down and claimed Joe's prick. Rhythmically, he moved his head up and down, his tongue swirling over the engorged flesh, keeping his lips pressed tightly and his teeth out of the way, like Joe had taught him.

"There's an art to suckin' cock, boy," Joe had said that night in the motel. "First, don't be afraid of it."

Wade had gazed down at Joe's cock at the time and had experienced a moment of fear. Joe's cock was big and thick. Wade had been sure it would never fit into his mouth at all. And he thought for sure he'd choke on it if he did get it into his mouth. But he hadn't.

"That's the way," Joe moaned, watching Wade suck his prick, and thrilling at the sight.

The burly soldier had thrown Wade on his belly and had proceeded to screw his butt to the mattress -- thoroughly and painfully, night after night.

How different things were with Joe?

At first, Wade had been almost violent in his refusal to allow Joe to fuck him. Joe had reversed the situation, taking Wade's thick cock into his own ass first. Then, after a thorough rimming, Joe finally fucked the nineteen-year-old's asshole, to their mutual enjoyment.

A light breeze rustled the cottonwoods and sent a cooling draft over their bodies.

Joe pulled his legs up and wide. Wade allowed Joe's big cock to slip from his mouth. He claimed a hairy ball and sucked gently. Joe squirmed, his feet waving in the air. Wade could smell the musk which announced a man's deepest arousal. A chill of excitement shot through him. He grasped Joe's legs, shoving them back, causing the older cowboy's butt to rise into the air. Wade's tongue flicked out and washed over Joe's hairy asshole.

"Ah!" Joe exclaimed. "Oh, yeah, Wade, oh, man, yeah, eat my butt, cowboy.

Eat my ass and then fuck the shit outta me!"

Wade needed no second invitation. He pressed his mouth against Joe's asshole and licked and sucked until he felt the rigid muscle beginning to relax. Then, using spit for lubricant, he pressed his cock against Joe's asshole and shoved.

His bulbous cockhead slipped inside and he gasped with pleasure. Joe reached down, spreading his ass cheeks wide. Wade shoved again and half his prick slid into Joe's butt. He paused, glancing at Joe's face to make sure everything was still all right. Joe's eyes were closed, his mouth slightly

open, passion washing his features. Wade shoved again, driving his hard cock in to the root.

He leaned down and kissed Joe's lips gently, teasingly. Joe lifted his head, pressing hard against Wade's mouth. His tongue flicking in and out.

Wade began to move his hips, short slow strokes with a pause between each in-and-out movement. Joe groaned, wrapping his arms around Wade's back, and humping upward.

With a deep, guttural moan, Wade began fucking Joe harder, using increasingly long strokes. His balls swung, hitting against Joe's upturned butt. Joe's legs wrapped around Wade's humping back. Their mouths sucked against each other. Wade moaned, his hot cock pumping in and out, hard and fast.

Squirming, Joe grasped Wade's back tighter, urging him on. Wade fucked Joe's asshole as hard and as fast as he could, knowing that that was the way Joe liked it best. Joe's cock twitched and oozed pre-cum. Arching his spine and groaning, Joe shoved his ass upward to greet Wade's powerful thrusts.

"God!" Joe exclaimed, pulling his mouth away. A tremor racked his muscular frame. "Deep. Wade! Get it in there deep!"

Wade shoved his cock into Joe's grasping asshole as far as it would go.

Joe's legs tightened around Wade's waist. Wade rotated his hips slightly and waited. Joe's arms tightened. Wade could feel Joe's cock spasming and thought he was coming, but Joe managed to hold back. Wade groaned softly, suddenly aware of the increasingly intense heat inside of Joe's asshole.

"It's okay," Joe whispered in a ragged voice. "Go on."

He fucked Joe deep, slow, and thoroughly. His balls began to pull up against his crotch, tighter and tighter. His cock ached from the intensity of its hardness. He reached down and under, grasping Joe's ass cheeks. Then he humped hard, fast and deep, bringing himself closer to coming.

"Damn!" Wade groaned. "Damn, you're so hot and tight!"

"And you're so fuckin' big!" Joe bit Wade's neck gently.

Joe tried to shove up in counter rhythm to Wade's big thrusts, his body rocking slightly under the power of Wade's thrusts. Wade savored every sensation, every aroma, his senses acutely aware of every nuance. He could feel Joe's cock, thick and hot, hard and throbbing, between their bellies. Joe's heels kicked against his ass, as if spurring a horse into a gallop, then into a flat-out run. As he fucked, his ass flexed and relaxed, each outward movement exposing his own asshole to the air and thrilling him. Wade knew it wouldn't be long before Joe would be plunging into his asshole.

"Look, cowboy," Joe had explained that night in the motel, "your ole Sarge was messed up in the head. There's nothin' wrong with takin' some cock up your ass, long's it's mutual and everyone agrees. You're not less a man for it, Wade. To my mind, you're more a man... and I'm here to prove it."

That was something which had plagued Wade's mind since the time he'd spent with Sgt. O'Malley. He'd been used, he knew, and he'd felt ashamed.

And he'd felt all the more ashamed because there was part of that experience he'd enjoyed. Joe had helped him that first night and all the times since. Wade knew his attitude was changing, little by little.

"Aw, Joe," he groaned, "I'm gonna shoot!"

"Go to it, cowboy," Joe panted. "Shoot in me! Gimme your jism!"

Pumping harder and faster, Wade drove his cock deep into Joe's asshole and shot his load of cum. He groaned, writhing his body against Joe as his cock spasmed. He was racked by the wonderful sensations of climax.

"Ahhh," Wade moaned, his voice tinged with ecstasy.

Panting, Wade pulled Joe into his arms and kissed him passionately, feeling his cock twitch deep inside Joe's butthole. Joe's legs tightened around

Wade's hips, holding the young cowboy's cock in place, his asshole flexing around it, then releasing it.

"Fuck me, Joe, now, while I'm hot."

Wade moved around, knelt on all fours and Joe knelt behind him. Joe shoved into Wade's asshole and pumped deep and hard. Wade rocked slightly, groaning, as. Joe's prick spread his asshole wide. The fiery, painful sensations were quickly replaced by hot pleasure as Joe's cock fucked him deep and hard.

Wade still couldn't fuck face-to-face, but Joe'd gotten him up off his belly into a more active position. The experience with Sgt. O'Malley was deeply branded in the young man's mind. Joe admired Wade's courage. A less courageous man would've been driven far away from man-to-man sex, but Wade hadn't been.

Joe's belly slapped softly against Wade's butt. He looked down, watching his thick cock spearing in and out of the young cowboy's asshole. Joe groaned. He wasn't going to be able to hold back, he realized. He was much too hot from the fucking Wade had given him. Hell, he thought, I almost shot my wad when he was fucking me.

"Your ass is beautiful," Joe whispered hoarsely, thrusting hard and deep.

He shot his load up Wade's ass and slumped over him.

Wade fetched soap from his saddle bags. They bathed in the stream, taking their time, lathering each other and playing slippery games with each other's flesh. Then, naked and dripping, they went to check their horses.

The hobbled animals hadn't moved very far and were contentedly munching the tall grass close to the tree line.

"Let's camp hero tonight," Joe said as they walked back to where their saddles were. "No need in goin' back to the truck just yet."

"Shit. Those horses need a rest and a good feed," Wade agreed. "And so do I."

They made camp, started a fire, and lay back on their blankets, using their saddles for head rats. They were on their way north, just drifting, aiming to take a job in Colorado or Wyoming. Neither one of them had ever seen the Rockies and both wanted to.

Joe brushed a fly off his belly, glancing overt at Wade. The young cowboy had dropped off to sleep. Joe found Wade's ability to drop instantly into sleep a thing to marvel over. He felt a warmth spread across his chest.

It thrilled and frightened him all at once. Joe had been a cowboy ever since he was old enough to work, and had lived all of his life on one ranch or another. The son of a family of drifters, Joe had become a drifter himself, rootless, with no particular aims in life, practically illiterate. He knew horses and cows, and he was good at ranching. He knew he liked sex with men, had known for as long as he could remember thinking about sex at all. He'd had saddle buddies, casual affairs which lasted only as long as a round-up or drive, then he'd drift on. Wade was the first cowboy he'd ever met that he'd asked to come along. That thrilled and frightened him, too.

"Whatcha starin' at?" Wade had come out of his catnap.

"You, I guess." Joe shrugged.

"Why's that? I snore?"

"Well, just to see ya in the saddle, you'd never know ya liked screwin' cowboy's assholes, Wade."

Wade laughed. "You're a curious one, Joe Horn. You shot your load less than an hour ago and look at ya."

Joe looked where Wade pointed and chuckled. He had a hard-on.

Wade moved over to. Joe's blankets, stretching out beside him, his hand claiming Joe's prick. "Damn," he whispered.

"What?" Joe asked, his voice deep in his chest.

"Just realizin' all the fun I've missed," Wade said.

Joe pulled Wade close, turning onto his side so that his cock pressed against the young man's belly. He could feel Wade's cock rising fast, and the heat beginning to build in his groin. Joe sighed softly and brushed his mouth across Wade's, deliberately using his heavy mustache to tickle and tease.

Wade groaned, squeezing Joe tight, his lips parting. He pressed his mouth against Joe's and his cock began to throb. They writhed against each other, their hands exploring, their tongues dueling.

Snake-like, Joe slipped downward, leaving a wet trail down Wade's chest and belly with his tongue, nuzzling at the young cowboy's crotch. Wade's cock jutted upward from his black bush, thick and hard, the blunt cockhead pushing from the foreskin. Joe pulled Wade's legs over his shoulders and began licking the thick, throbbing cock. He sucked Wade's cock slowly, the previous session having tapped his more urgent needs. He now looked forward to a languorous cocksucking session.

And both of them were so involved that they didn't hear their horses wicker, not the soft footsteps approaching.

CHAPTER TWO

Jud Hawk stood silently a moment, as surprised to find the two cowboys entwined as he was to find them at all -- much less, bareassed and sucking cock. At first, he was undecided about what to do. He'd quickly established with a glance that they had no weapons handy, so he didn't risk an unwarranted shooting incident. Things were tense enough between white men and Indians these days without that. A slight breeze stirred his breechcloth, and touched, as if with cool fingers, his stiffening cock.

He held his rifle across his front, a bullet in the chamber. His long, black hair hung in braids down his back, tied with rawhide thongs. A necklace of bear claws graced his thick neck. He knew he looked like some Remington painting suddenly come to life, but he'd shed his civilized clothing and had donned the traditional dress of his tribe, as he often did, when he set out for a week in the wilds.

Despite his efforts to will his cock into flaccidness, it rose, pushing against his breechcloth. He cleared his throat, ready for action.

"Jesus Christ!" Wade exclaimed.

The two cowboys struggled to disengage, but only succeeded in further entwining themselves and finally froze in an awkward position, their eyes turned toward the indian.

"Don't reach for any weapons," Jud said, swinging his rifle toward them and frowning fiercely. But, seeing their genuine fright and their wilting hardons, he grinned.

"What do you want?" Joe asked. Where, oh, where is my rifle? he thought.

Damn, too far away.

"Do I smell coffee?" Jud said, lowering his rifle only slightly as he stepped toward the small fire.

"Yes," Joe said, sounding anxious to please. "Help yourself. Uh, ain't got no sugar."

"I drink it black," Jud replied, squatting by the fire. "Something I learned in the Air Force." He kept his eyes on Joe, frowning again.

"Don't go for your rifle, cowboy." His voice was soft, but there was steel in it.

Wade gulped and slowly pulled himself away from Joe. He reached for his jeans, then froze when the indian swung the rifle toward him.

"Uh, I just wanna put my pants on," he said weakly.

"No need," Jud replied. "You look fine the way you are." His black eyes cut to Joe. "You, too. Actually, you both looked a lot better with hard-ons." Jud laughed at his own humor. Wade and Joe exchanged curious glances. "My name is Jud Hawk. You've nothing to fear from me... as long as you don't go for those rifles over there."

"We ain't got no money," Joe lied.

"I doubt that," Jud said sharply. "But I'm not a thief. Look, I understand what you two were doing when I showed up. I didn't intend to break up any panics. I've had a few like them myself. If I'd wanted to rob you, I could've killed both of you with one bullet while you," he said, gesturing at Joe with his rifle, "were sucking his cock."

"Okay, okay," Joe said, squatting down. He was acutely aware of his nudity and that upset him. He was even more aware that some stranger had snuck up and seen him sucking cock, and that embarrassed him.

Wade also squatted, less embarrassed than Joe. He'd caught what the indian had said about having a few parties like the one Joe and he'd been enjoying. Curiosity pricked his interest.

"I also want you to know that I'm a Reservation policeman and that you are trespassing. That's reason enough to take you in."

Wade quietly and quickly told Jud why they were there.

"Yeah," Jud said, "that stretch of sand's a bitch. My people've lost some sheep and cattle out there."

Wade poured coffee, sharing a cup with Joe. Jud Hawk was ruggedly handsome. His chest rippled with power, as did his thick arms, the result of weight training. There was a knife scar on his left cheek. His nose was hooked, and his mouth was wide and thin-lipped. His breechcloth hung between powerful, hairless thighs, and seemed to cling to a thick, semi-erect cock.

"Why the costume?" Joe asked.

Jud grinned, shaking his head. "When I get enough of civilization, I peel off the uniform, slip into this and head for the badlands. Clears my head."

"It looks cool," Wade commented, fascinated by the way the breechcloth seemed to caress Jud's cock. "But I'd be fried to a crisp in an hour, dressed like that."

"Uh," Joe cleared his throat, "uh, you said you were familiar with, it, you know..."

"Homosexuality," Jud said in a clear voice. "Yes. It's not uncommon among adolescents of all races, you know." He could tell that Joe and Wade didn't know much about the subject at all. He shrugged. "I'm a gay Indian."

Wade's throat was dry. "Uh, how do you feel about... you know, homosexuality?"

"I practice it as often as I can." Jud's eyes deliberately dropped and stared at Wade's cock.

Wade's cock and balls stirred under Jud's heated gaze. He felt his heart jump with excitement as erotic images flooded his mind. He gulped softly, glancing away, but was very aware that his cock was beginning to harden.

His gaze met Joe's. Joe's eyes were bright and warm. Wade dropped his gaze and saw that Joe's cock was standing straight and hard between his legs. Wade slowly turned his attention back to Jud Hawk. His eyes widened. The indian had risen and dropped his breechcloth. He stood on the opposite side of the fire, nude but for his necklace. His thick, uncut cock was rigid.

"Damn," Joe whispered, his gaze locked on Jud's prick.

Jud stepped around the fire and knelt between the two cowboys. Joe and Wade turned to him, their hard-ons jerking up and down slightly. Hawk reached out and took a cock in each hand, running his fingers up and down them. Wade leaned closer, one hand caressing the indian's broad shoulders and slowly moving down to caress his loan, hard ass. Joe reached over and grasped Jud's prick.

The indian closed his eyes and moaned. Joe leaned forward and pressed his mouth to Jud's. The indian groaned, tilting his head and warming to the kiss. His hands eagerly moved over the two cocks. Wade scrunched closer, his hands moving over Jud's chest and ass at the same time. Jud gave Wade's cock a little appreciative squeeze.

Joe reached out and pulled Wade into a triple embrace. The three of them knelt on the grass, their arms around each other, their hard-ons brushing together at the center of their small circle, and tried to create a three-way kiss. They almost succeeded.

With a deep throated groan, Jud bent forward, taking Joe's cock into his mouth and sucking hard and fast. His head bobbed up and down, his braids dangling. Joe placed a hand on the back of Jud's head. Wade rose and stepped around slightly, placing his cock between Joe's parted lips. The gray-eyed cowboy moaned and sucked the young man's cock. A thrilling rush shot through Wade. He pumped his cock in and out of Joe's mouth, ecstatic over the situation, his mind racing over the possibilities.

Joe spread his legs wide and sat back on his heels. Hawk got onto his hands and knees and continued, lustily sucking Joe's cock. Joe eagerly sucked at Wade's cock, meaning at the dual sensation -- his cock hitting the back of

Jud's throat while Wade's hit the back of his throat. He shivered with excitement.

Looking down, Wade stared at Jud. He'd never seen a blow-job before.

Looking down at his own cock in Joe's mouth during a blow-job wasn't the same thing. Hell, he thought, I've never seen anything! With a groan, Jud released Joe's cock and reached for Wade's. Wade eagerly switched from Joe's mouth to Jud's. Jud thrust forward, taking Wade's cock down his throat. Wade grabbed the back of Jud's head, his legs trembling.

Jud shivered and pulled back slightly, then began sucking Wade's cock with the same lustiness he'd sucked Joe's. It'd been a long time since he'd had such rousing sex. On his last vacation, he'd gone to San Francisco for three weeks and had spent the entire time going from one sexual adventure to another. He guided Wade down onto the grass and had the young cowboy lie back. Then, kneeling between Wade's legs, he licked the young cowboy's balls. His back arched and his ass slowly rose and fell in tandem with his sucking. Joe knelt behind Jud and, as Jud sucked and licked Wade's prick, Joe began rimming the indian's asshole.

Wade spread his legs as wide as he could. Pre-cum oozed from his piss-slit. Jud groaned as Joe rimmed him. Then Jud shoved Wade's ass into the air and began rimming him, too. Wade closed his eyes for a moment, letting the images sink into his brain. God, what a scene! he thought.

I'd never have imagined it.

Joe sat back a moment and stared at Jud's dark butt. The ass cheeks were slightly spread and he could see the dark brown puckered flesh and the sheen left behind by his tongue and his spit. His cock jumped and spasmed, and a deep lust shot through his groin.

Jud's balls were hanging low and swaying slightly as he began sucking Wade's cock once more. His thick rope of a cock was rigid, the dark skin shiny, an arrow-shaped cockhead pushing out from the foreskin. Thick, heavy veins stood out in sharp relief from the cock skin.

As the indian's ass continued to move slightly, Jud spread his legs a bit more, exposing his asshole more clearly to Joe's view. Joe shoved his head forward and licked his shitter quickly and lustily several times, then pulled back. Jud's asshole flexed. It was like an invitation. Joe's breath was warm against it and Jud moaned.

Joe rimmed the indian's asshole once again and Jud's moans deepened.

Shoving back, Jud wiggled his ass against Joe's mouth. The cowboy pressed hard against Jud's butthole, his tongue moving rapidly.

The indian rocked back and forth, his mouth sucking Wade's cock, his asshole warming quickly to Joe's knowing rimming. His big cock jerked as a shudder passed through his rugged body.

Joe felt the indian's asshole relax, and he shoved his tongue hard and fast, almost achieving penetration. Jud's body jerked, and his groan rumbled in his chest.

Leaning back, Joe spit onto his cock, rubbing the saliva over it. With one hand steadying the indian's ass, he aimed his cockhead and pushed against Jud's hairless asshole. His cock slipped inside. Jud groaned, a mixture of pleasure and pain, and kept his butt still.

"Oh, shit," Wade moaned, shoving up onto his elbows, his eyes wide with excitement. "You're gonna fuck him... oh, fuck, man, you're gonna..."

Joe, who was halfway in, nodded. He kept his gaze on his cock, watching it slip slowly into Jud's shithole. The indian was tight and hot, and he shoved back slowly, taking Joe's big cock in all the way. Joe groaned, feeling Jud's asshole becoming moist. Jud trembled, rocked forward slightly, then slammed back while arching his spine, taking Joe's throbbing cock into his asshole hard and fast.

"Ahhh," Joe moaned softly, feeling Jud's asshole grasp his cock firmly.

"You're really gonna fuck him," Wade rasped, his pulse racing wildly. He glanced down. Jud was sucking on his cock with such wild passion and at

the same time getting a cock up his ass. "Oh, shit, man... shit..."

Joe moved his hips slightly, testing. Everything was all right. He grasped Jud's hips and began a slow, short-stroked pumping, making sure the indian was relaxed and ready. It also built his own passion.

Unable to see clearly enough, Wade eased onto his knees. With his cock in Jud's mouth, he was able to see Joe fucking the indian as well as watch his own cock get sucked. "Wild, wild..." he whispered, sensational rushes passing through his groin and making his balls tingle wonderfully.

Joe looked up, his gaze meeting Wade's, as he fucked the indian's asshole. Wade started pumping his hips in rhythm to Joe's movements. It dawned on Wade what they were doing, fucking a man from both ends. He held Jud's face and face-fucked him gently. Jud's muscular body trembled as deep, chest rumbling moans erupted from him. Wade shoved into Jud's sucking mouth and leaned forward, his hands caressing the indian's back.

Joe leaned forward and, kissed Wade passionately.

Under Joe's guidance, Jud lay on his back. Joe pulled Jud's legs into the air and entered his hairless asshole once again, pumping with long, slow, deep strokes. Jud's black eyes sparkled with lust. He looked up at Wade and gestured to him. Wade, following Jud's guidance, straddled the indian's face and lowered his ass. Jud began a lusty rim job as Joe fucked him. Wade groaned and jerked on his cock, thrilling at the feeling of a tongue on his asshole and the sensation of his balls bouncing against Jud's chin.

Rearing back, Joe fucked hard and fast, his thick cock spreading Jud's asshole wide. Wade looked down and watched the action, all the while Jud licked ravenously at his asshole. Wade remembered the thrill he'd had not long ago when Joe'd fucked him. He looked up and watched the passionate ecstasy flooding over Joe's face as he neared climax.

Groaning, his asshole warmed by Jud's tongue, Wade feasted his eyes on the sight of Joe's cock plowing into Jud's asshole and Jud's thick cock jerking and oozing pre-cum. Joe's cock was a near blur, the skin glistening in the late afternoon light. Jud spread Wade's ass cheeks wide and his tongue flicked hard and wet over his asshole, then poked at it, seeking entry. Wade tightened, panic sweeping him for a moment. Jud's tongue licked and licked until Wade relaxed once again.

Wade's fist moved rapidly up and down his cock. His asshole felt wonderful, warm and sensitive. His balls were full of cum and bounced against Jud's chin. Long, sticky strings of pre-cum oozed from his piss-slit, dripping down onto Jud's belly. He burned, rocking back and pressing against Jud's mouth. Jud sucked at his asshole and Wade gasped loudly.

"Ohhhhh!" Joe moaned, thrusting hard into Jud, his fingers tightening around Jud's ankles. "Oh, man, I'm gonna shoot! I'm gonna shoot."

Leaning forward as he thrust deeply into hid, Joe kissed Wade passionately, groaning, as he shot his cum. His muscular, hairy body glistened with sweat. His grows deepened as he continued to thrust into Jud's asshole. A vein in his throat throbbed. His stomach muscles rippled with each movement and his pectoral muscles stood out, as if he'd been pumping iron.

"I'm comin', man! Oh, shit, I'm comin'!" Joe's nipples were hard with excitement, the peaks of sensitive flesh almost white. Wade reached out and pinched one. Joe moaned loudly, shoving his nipple against Wade's fingers and fucking faster.

Trembling with excitement, hanging on the edge of climax, Wade moved his cock over Jud's mouth and flicking tongue. He jerked his cock, making his balls swing wildly. He gasped and rocked faster, as Jud's tongue lapped at his asshole, his prick, his swinging sac. He rolled Joe's tit between thumb and forefinger and watched Joe's fascinating, undulating thrusts.

Suddenly, he knew he was going to come.

"I wish I was fuckin' you like that," Wade rasped, his eyes locked on Joe's cock.

"Yeah," Joe said, a tremor shaking his body. "Do it now, cowboy, while I'm hotter'n a pistol."

Jud rolled onto his side, Joe's throbbing cock still deep inside his asshole. Joe wrapped his arms around the indian's big chest and humped up close.

"Damn!" Jud rasped. "Don't you ever get soft, cowboy?"

"With someone around as sexy as you? Naw." He humped had a couple of times. "You doin' okay, Jud?"

"I'm doin' just fine, cowboy," had replied, humping back and wiggling his butt against Joe's belly. "I haven't had this much fun since one night on Castro Street."

Wade lay on his side behind Joe and fucked into the gray-eyed cowboy's asshole. It was extremely hot and wonderfully pliable. He groaned as his prick slipped deeper and deeper into Joe's shitter.

"Oh, yeah, Wade, that's toad, that's real good." He reached back and held Wade's ass cheeks firmly, keeping the young cowboy's cock deep inside him a few moments, his asshole flexing. "Now, gimme a little room, Wade, and I'll show you how we ride this here bronc."

Joe began fucking, slowly at first, making sure the angles were right. He thrust into Jud, withdrew and drove his asshole onto Wade's throbbing prick, then thrust into Jud and impaled his ass on Wade's cock. His movements became stronger and harder. Wade gasped, shoving up on one elbow to watch as much of the action as he could.

"Goddamn, Joe," Wade whispered, "when you said you was gonna show me a few things shit, I thought you meant scenery."

CHAPTER THREE

As Joe withdrew his prick from Jud's butt, Wade thrust forward, slamming his cock into Joe's asshole. Wade's belly slapped softly against Joe's ass cheeks, making them jiggle slightly. The sight was amazing to Wade.

Within a few more strokes, they found the rhythm and fucked passionately.

Joe did most of the fucking, shoving back and impaling his asshole on Wade's cock, then flexing his butt, thrusting forward and pumping his thick cock into Jud's pliable asshole.

"Ohhh," Jud groaned, grasping his thick, uncut cock and masturbating hard and fast. "Fuck it, man, aw, jeez, yeah!"

The speed increased. Joe worked his hips back and forth. He slammed inter Jud to the hilt and writhed. The muscular Indian gasped and humped back against Joe's cock. Then, moaning, Joe shoved back and writhed his butt against Wade.

With a strangulated cry, Jud flung his arms outward and humped back as his cock spurted cum onto the grass. A moment later, Joe was groaning as he climaxed a second time deep in the indians asshole. Wade pumped his cock hard and shot his load, too. The three of them lay on the grass, panting, entangled, eyes closed, pressing hot flesh against hot flesh.

"Oh, God," Wade murmured, his check lying against Joe's hard shoulder. "I never dreamed..." He let the thought trail off, unspoken.

They disengaged themselves and washed in the stream, exchanging appreciative looks and comments, then lay and let the sun dry them. It was late afternoon and the sun was sinking fast. There was a hint of coolness in the air, promising a crisp but bearable night in the open.

Wade's stomach growled loudly, eliciting a laugh from Joe and Jud.

They shared hot, black coffee again while a pot of beans was placed on the fire and bacon was sliced for the frying pan.

"You sure gave us a scare," Joe said to Jud, laughing. "If you'd waited ten seconds, I'd a blowed my wad when ya cleared your throat." The indian smiled. "Well, you two gave me a bit of a surprise, too."

"How?" Wade asked. "You dropped in on us."

"Oh, I know that," Jud replied, his black eyes dancing with merriment.

"It was the size of your cocks that gave me the scare!"

Wade glanced admiringly over Jud Hawk's rugged physique, liking the copper hue of his skin, then let his gaze drop to the man's cock.

"You ain't so small yourself, Jud Hawk," Wade commented. "Not small at all." He grinned.

The bacon popped as it hit the pan. The beans were beginning to smell appetizing.

"D'you have a regular circuit?" Joe asked.

"Naw," Jud said, shrugging. "I just go where there's a call for me. I'm on my own time, right now. Where were you headed? Wyoming?"

"Colorado, Wyoming..." Joe shrugged. "Wherever we kin find work, I guess."

"Maybe I can help you," Jud said, sipping the coffee. "I've got an old friend up in Wyoming, owns a ranch. He might be lookin' for some hands."

"Sounds nice," Wade replied.

"Maybe and maybe not," Joe said. "Oh, Aaron Long's not gonna be down on either of you for what you like to do in bed. He might want to join you!"

Jud laughed, obviously at some rather private and erotic memories.

The next day, hid rode with them back to their truck and showed them where to find Aaron Long's ranch on their maps.

The town was called Tyler. It was small and neat and looked as if it had been by-passed by modem times. There was a single, paved main street and a scattering of TV antennas, a few neon signs and one block with parking meters.

Also following Jud's advice and directions, Joe and Wade drove to the old livery stables in order to bed their horses overnight. "Peele's Livery and Blacksmith" was painted on a small sign beside the door. Bradley Peele, the proprietor, was a heavily muscled man in his middle thirties with an infectious vitality and a sexy walk.

Bradley took Joe's mare around back to the smithy and pumped up the forge. Wade stabled his horse and put a nose bag on him full of oats, then went to join Joe.

"Seems Bradley's a buddy of Aaron Long's," Joe said, giving Wade a knowing wink.

"Well," Bradley drawled, his powerful arms pumping the bellows, "I don't know as I'd call us buddies, but we git right friendly now and again."

"And Bradley says the Lazy S ain't too far out," Joe continued, his gray eyes feasting on the sight of Bradley's powerfully built physique.

Wade cocked his head to one side and said firmly, "I want a bath in a bathtub, a night's sleep on a real mattress, a restaurant meal."

"Okay, okay," Joe said, holding his hands up in surrender. "We've been campin' the whole way, savin' money, I guess we can spare the cash."

"We better. I got, cockleburs in places I didn't know they could git."

They arranged to stable the horses overnight and to park their truck and trailer behind the building. As Bradley walked with them around to the

front, shouts attracted their attention. Two men were fighting ferociously in the street in front of a bar and grill, and a crowd was forming around them.

"Here comes the sheriff," Bradley said, pointing.

A tall, lean man strode across the street and shoved his way through the crowd and deftly collared one of the fighters, lifting the man off his feet.

"What's goin' on here?" Wade asked.

"Well," Bradley said, shaking his head, "at least they didn't kill each other."

"What's all this about?" Joe asked.

"Lazy S and Box A," Bradley said.

"What is it? A modern version of a range war or somethin'?" Wade asked, frowning.

"I hope not," Bradley said.

Wade accomplished all that he'd wanted, except the long sleep on a mattress. He and Joe settled in a bar called the Silver Dollar Saloon, where the cowboys hung out. They had two drinks in them when Bradley joined them. By their third drink together, Bradley was telling them some tales of his adventures in the Orient when he'd been a merchant seaman.

"There's this one position called two-in-one," he confided. "Now that's where ya git two cocks in one asshole at the same time."

"Impossible," Wade whispered.

"I don't believe it," Joe said, folding his arms over his chest.

"I'll prove it," Bradley replied, sticking his jaw out. "I'll just prove it to you. C'mon back to my place."

Bradley's one-room apartment behind the livery contained a large brass bed, a fireplace and a table with four chairs. Bradley lit the oil lamps, added a

log to the fire, and began stripping. Joe and Wade followed his example. Bradley's heavily muscled body shone in the flickering light. He turned to the two cowboys, a slight smile on his face, and walked toward them slowly, his thick cock swaying.

"You cowboy's sure got horse cocks," he rasped. He reached out and grasped their hardening cocks. They stepped close. Bradley knelt down and ran his mouth over, their cocks. "I really get hot with two cocks," he growled. He took their cockheads into his mouth at the same time, his tongue swirling.

Wade and Joe wrapped an arm around each other, standing with their hips and thighs pressed together, their cockheads inside Bradley's mouth. Wade trembled with excitement and groaned. He turned and met Joe's mouth with his own. Bradley grasped their hips as his mouth and tongue lapped at their engorged cocks.

Wade looked down, startled and excited by the incredible sight below him.

Bradley's lips were impossibly stretched by the two thick cocks, which were getting thicker as they became harder. And he kept trying to get more cock into his mouth! Bradley's cock stood almost completely vertical, jutting out from a thick, dark growth of pubic hair. His cock appeared as muscular as the rest of him, so fat that its length was deceptively small. Bradley's cock was almost as thick as it was long.

"Let's get onta the bed," Bradley growled, his eyes fastened on their cocks. "I'll give ya a good build up with my mouth and then ya kin both fuck my asshole."

Bradley had been a cabin boy at twelve, a thin, clumsy boy in those days, who'd at first been forced into sex, but came to expect it and then to enjoy it... all within a matter of fifteen days or so, to hear him tell the story.

"Tell me what ya want," he whispered as he climbed onto the bed.

"Suck this cowboy's cock," Joe said, shoving Wade toward the big bed.

"Suck him till he can't stand it no more."

Bradley gladly complied and Wade squirmed under his export and eager sucking and licking. Joe rasped commands, for he quickly realized what Bradley wanted to hear. Wade was moaning within a few minutes and fighting to keep from coming.

"Now, me," Joe said. "C'mere and take this man's cock down your throat."

"Yes, sir," Bradley murmured, moving quickly from Wade's cock to Joe's and swiftly taking it completely into his throat.

Joe gasped. He'd only experienced this act a few times before and it never failed to excite and thrill him. Wade sat up, eyes wide, his cock jerking up and down. Bradley's lips were pressed firmly against Joe's cock hair. As the burly blacksmith pulled back, he sucked air into his lungs, then began bobbing his head back and forth, sucking Joe's cock for all he was worth.

Moaning, Joe closed his eyes, and let the sensations wash over him. He felt a mouth on his nipples and groaned as Wade began to suck them. He reached down and grasped Wade's prick.

Bradley shoved his head forward, taking Joe's cock down his throat once more, holding it there, moaning. The vibrations made Joe's cock tingle as if ready, to shoot.

"Oh, man, easy or I'm gonna shoot." Joe groaned.

Bradley sat back, a pleased expression on his face, his eyes bright. His cock was oozing precum. His hairy balls were drawn up tight against his crotch.

"Now," Joe said in a raspy voice, "show us that trick of yours. Two-in-one."

"Sure," Bradley said eagerly.

He fetched a can of lard and greased their cocks thoroughly, then lubricated his asshole lavishly.

"Your cocks're so big, I'm tempted to try it the hard way," Bradley said as he wiped his sticky hands on a towel. "But, we'd better do it the easy way, first. It's been a while."

Joe lay back and Bradley straddled him, easing Joe's big prick into his greasy asshole. Wade watched as Joe's cock slowly entered Bradley's ass.

Sitting on Joe's cock, Bradley paused, flexing his asshole around the throbbing hard-on. Then he leaned over, as if to kiss Joe, flattening his torso against Joe's as much as he could.

"Now, Wade, you get behind there and fuck me doggy style," the big blacksmith said.

"It won't fit," Wade said.

"Yes, it will, now go on."

Hardly believing it was possible, Wade knelt behind Bradley, as he'd been instructed and aimed his cockhead at the already stretched asshole. As far as Wade was concerned, it was totally fined, but he shoved. To his surprise, his cockhead slipped inside. Both Bradley and Joe moaned, although for different erotic reasons.

Then, taking it easy, Wade thrust the rest of his cock into Bradley's asshole. He could feel Joe's cock -- thick, hot and throbbing -- and the hot, tight moistness of Bradley's asshole. He felt a rush of excitement race through him.

"Oh, man," Bradley moaned against Joe's neck, "that's it, oh, yes, cowboy, that's it..."

Joe looked at Wade over Bradley's shoulder. Wade's face was flushed with excitement and arousal, his hazel eyes glittering and staring fixedly at the point of penetration. His gaze lifted to Joe's face.

"You wouldn't believe it if you could see it," the young cowboy rasped.

"You just wouldn't believe it. Hot damn!"

Groaning, Joe sought Bradley's mouth. The blacksmith moaned deeply as their lips met and locked in a searing kiss. Joe wrapped his arms around Bradley's muscular back and held him tightly. He couldn't see it, but he could feel it -- the incredible sensation of two cocks in one asshole. He almost blew his load.

As Wade began fucking, Joe and Bradley both moaned ecstatically. Wade's cock, thick and hard and greasy, moved slowly within the tight confines of Bradley's asshole. Joe shivered at the sensation of it all. His cock throbbed and he yearned to pump, but it was just impossible. The feeling of Wade's cock moving across his own was almost too sensational to bear.

"Oh, yes," Bradley moaned, arching the small of his back slightly. "Get it in there, cowboy, do it!"

Wade took a firm, hard hold on the blacksmith's ass, looked down, and started a slow, deep thrusting which sent the three of them half-mad with lust. Bradley's asshole seemed to be stretched beyond endurance, beyond possibility. Both Wade's and Joe's cocks were thick pieces by anyone's standards.

His deep, deliberately slow thrusts sent wild sensations shooting through Joe, who tried to also fuck Bradley. The slight movement he did achieve made the blacksmith cry out in deep pleasure. Bradley's big, rough hands grasped Joe's ribs and he shoved back slightly, meeting Wade's and Joe's combined thrusts.

"I can't believe it," Wade rasped. "I just can't believe it." His voice was raw with arousal. "No asshole should stretch like this." He humped in hard and fast, experimentally.

"Oh, God!" Bradley groaned. "It's okay, yeah. That's good, cowboy. Do it that way!"

Thrusting then with force and vigor, Wade pumped his hips, helped by the heavy grease lubricating his way. His belly slapped against Bradley's taut ass cheeks. His balls swung. His lungs burned. His pulse throbbed.

Joe reached down, stretching, unable to resist, and touched Bradley's asshole with his fingertips, touched the two cocks and gasped. He kept his fingers in place and humped slightly. He gasped, feeling his cock move in tandem with Wade's thrusting.

"Oh, yes, yes!" Wade panted. "Keep 'em there, Joe!"

"Pull my butt wide?" Bradley said.

Joe pulled Bradley's already widely stretched ass cheeks, causing the man's asshole to stretch even more. Bradley groaned. Wade humped faster, harder. Joe trembled as his climax neared and he could do nothing to hold it back.

"Hard, hard!" Bradley rasped.

Wade's mind was spinning, his cock throbbing. Taking a slight pause, he quickly resumed fucking, fast and hard, his climax close. His ass bunched. Throwing his head back and thrusting hard, he shot his load.

"Chew cum?" Joe rasped.

Wade nodded his head, trembling, letting the sensational feelings flood him. Quickly, Joe humped upward and with quick, short strokes, brought himself off. As he groaned, he felt hot, sticky cum seeping over his belly. Bradley had come too.

They washed off in the horse trough near the forge, then hurried back inside to stand bare-assed by the fire. They smoked together while warming their butts.

Bradley had many tales to tell of his adventures as a merchant seaman and Wade and Joe knew they had a warm welcome with Bradley any time. That made both of them feel good, to have made a friend so early in a new and strange place.

"About this Lazy S and Box A thing," Joe said.

"Oh, that." Bradley shook his head and turned to warm his front. "Aaron Long, now he's the Lazy S owner, and Roy Poole, he owns Box A. Been

buddies for as long as anyone 'round here can remember. Since they was tikes, I hear tell. 'Bout a year back, though, things started fallin'

apart between 'em. That fight ain't the first one that's happened here in Tyler." Bradley shook his head. "Too bad, too bad. I heard that they was real saddle buddies once, if you know what I mean."

Joe and Wade knew. They knew that the majority of modem range wars were fought in court. But some weren't. And neither of them had any desire nor the inclination to be a warrior, gunslinger, or hero.

"Well, we'll be talkin' to Aaron Long tomorrow. Maybe we'll find out somethin'." Joe spoke quietly, but he frowned, trying to keep his sense of worry from Wade.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bradley brought out a bottle of whiskey and glasses. They sat at the small table, near the fire. Bradley related some of his adventures in the exotic ports he'd visited, and some of the erotic customs he'd learned.

"Like the beads," he said, showing them what he was talking about -- jade balls strung on silk thread. "You grease these fuckers up and shove 'em up your ass. Then, when you come, you pull 'em out. Real quick."

Wade was wide-eyed. "What's it do?"

"Increases the pleasure," Bradley said.

"I guess it does!" Joe laughed.

"Whatcha do when you're hot and alone?" Wade asked.

"Well, cowboy, if'n I can't find some big cocked stud over at the Silver Dollar, I always got my friend." Her brought a velvet-lined sandalwood box to the table and produced an ivory dildo. "Just sit down on that feller and jerk my cock until I'm satisfied. Wonderful invention. Never gets tired!"

"Lemme see that." Joe said. He held it a moment, studying it closely. "I gotta try this just once."

Joe sat slowly down on the ivory cock, his eyes getting larger, his mouth opening in surprise. "Damn!" His cock was rigid, shiny and oozing precum. "Oh, hot damn in the mornin'!" Suddenly, cum spurted from Joe's cock and he groaned and trembled as it spewed wildly.

Wade stared, his own cock jumping up and down.

"Now, that looks real interestin'," Bradley said, looking at Wade's erect cock. He rose and straddled Wade's lap where he sat and slowly lowered himself down onto Wade's hard prick. He grasped the chair's back for support and balance, then began lifting and falling.

Wade quivered as intense sensations built within his rock-hard cock. His fingers dug into Bradley's ass. "Oh, man, I'm high and hot!" he moaned.

He bucked up and came.

Early the next morning, they took the pickup with their mounts in the double trailer, and drove the fifteen miles to the Lazy S Ranch. The main building was a rambling stone and split-log structure, one story tall, which had obviously been added onto from time to time over the years. A porch ran the width of the building and around one side. There was a Lazy S jeep parked to one side under some trees.

Wade pulled, the pick-up over by the jeep and parked. There was a big, blaze-faced stallion tied to the rail in front of the house. As they approached the house, they heard boot steps coming around the side of the building.

A tall, broad-shouldered, muscular man in his early thirties strode into view. He was hatless. His wavy auburn hair touched his collar and a full, curly beard of the same color touched his bandana.

"Howdy," Joe said, stepping around the horse. "We're lookin' for Aaron Long?"

"That's me," the man replied. His voice was a deep bass, rumbling in his large chest.

"Joe Horn," Joe introduced himself. "An' Wade Marsh."

"Howdy," Aaron replied.

"We heard, uh, you might be lookin' for some hands," Joe continued. "An'

we..."

His voice cut off sharply, almost as if he'd been strangled. A large dog had plodded up behind Aaron, looking for all the world like a wolf.

Aaron turned his head slightly to see what Joe and Wade were staring at.

"Oh. Sit down, boy. Sit, now." The animal obeyed, looking up at Aaron with obvious devotion. "No need to worry," Aaron said, returning his full attention to the cowboys. "Uh, you was sayin'?"

"We're lookin' for work, Mr. Long," Wade said. "Feller said you might be needin' some hands."

"Might. Might not. Who's the feller?"

"Reservation policeman name of Jud Hawk," Wade said.

A smile appeared across Aaron's face. "Jud Hawk? You know ole Hawk? Well, come on up and sit a spell!" He turned to the dog. "Wolf, you stay." He gestured to Joe and Wade. "C'mon into the house. I haven't seen ole Hawk in, let's see, two years come April. Time sure does fly. Chuk Loy," he called as they entered the living room. "Company!"

Settled in the big, rough living room, they enjoyed the hot coffee and freshly baked gingerbread provided by Aaron's Chinese cook. Joe related how they met Jud Hawk.

Wade related the meeting with Bradley and the fight in town. Neither cowboy mentioned their sexual adventures. If Aaron was as friendly with Jud and Bradley as they'd claimed, he'd understand that part anyway.

"That damn fool Sonny." Aaron shook his head. "He'll be in jail a while and I'm gonna leave him there. Won't be able to work till his leg sets anyways. An' one of my other hands got hisseif killed two weeks back over some bimbo in the roadhouse down towards Cheyenne." Aaron lit a cigarette. "So, ya see, I do need some help 'round here."

"Uh, Mr. Long," Wade said, sitting forward, "is there a range war brewin' here?"

Aaron frowned, blowing smoke. "I sure to God hope not, son. I don't want none of my hands fightin'. An' I do restrict the carryin' of fire arms.

My lawyer's workin' on my problems and that's the way I want it kept.

Now, I'll show you where you'll be sleepin'."

Wade and Joe would be sharing a room in one wing of the main house. There was no bunkhouse at the Lazy S. There was a communal bathroom for the hands, and a big dining room where everyone ate.

"Now, I'll leave you to settle in," Aaron said. "Park your truck with the others. There's plenty of oats in the barn and the corral's behind.

Supper's at six-thirty when you hear Chuk Loy bang that damned gong of his."

At supper, Joe and Wade met some of the other hands -- Jesse Evans, a blond, curly headed young man with a thin mustache. Kit Peterson, a swarthy, muscular quiet man with merry blue eyes and Bone Jones, the oldest of the three, who had a thick, drooping mustache and hot, bedroom eyes.

After the meal, Bone and Kit went out to the tack room to work. Jesse and Aaron settled in the living room before the fire. Wade and Joe strolled out onto the porch.

"I'm gettin' sleepy," Wade said. "Let's check the horses and turn in.

Okay?"

They were coming through the barn after checking their horses in the corral when they heard soft, urgent noises coming from the tack room.

Wade turned, curious, and stepped toward the door. Then he stopped and smiled. He understood what the sounds were. Bone and Kit were getting it on in the tack room. He glanced at Joe, smiling.

Joe grinned and tiptoed toward the tack room door. He placed his eye to a chink in the planks. His body gave a jerk. Wade came up beside him and placed his eye to a similar chink and stifled a gasp of surprise.

Kit stood with his legs spread wide, and slowly bent himself over a saddle on a saw horse, his bare butt vulnerably exposed. Bone stood a foot or two behind him, his jeans pushed down, his cock aimed at Kit's ass. It wasn't the situation which startled Joe and Wade... it was the size of Bone's cock. It was, without a doubt, the most enormous prick either had ever seen -- a thick, heavily veined, knobby-headed cock which looked like it measured close to a foot in length and the circumference was beyond estimation.

Joe stepped back softly, his mouth agape, his gray eyes wide. He looked at Wade. The young cowboy also stepped back, turning to his buddy, a questioning look on his face. Had they seen what they thought they'd seen? Both of them immediately returned to their peepholes and stared, breathless.

Bone greased his huge cock lavishly. Kit writhed his butt slightly, looking over his shoulder anxiously and eagerly.

"C'mon, Bone," he rasped, "I been waitin' for this fuckin' for a week, man."

Bone grunted and stepped closer. He aimed and began shoving his cock into the young cowboy's asshole. Kit's back arched and his mouth fell open as a long, guttural sound ripped from his throat. Bone paused, his back arched, his huge cock only into Kit's ass a few inches. Kit's asshole was flexing madly, trying to accommodate Bone's thick prick. A shudder racked his fair-skinned frame. He sucked in a deep breath and nodded slowly.

Bone pressed forward, his cock slipping slowly but surely into Kit's asshole.

Kit's body convulsed, his moans deepening and becoming almost animalistic

-- some mingling of passion and pain, pleasure and need that defied description, but which was totally erotic.

Roughly, Bone grasped Kit's hips and shoved more and more of his big cock into the young cowboy. With most of his cock inserted, Bone began fucking, slowly, but with powerful thrusts that rocked Kit forward against the saddle and saw horse. There was a creaking of leather and wood counter pointing Bone's thrusts.

Joe stepped back, his breath suddenly short. His cock was hard, pressing against his jean leg. He blinked, reached out and touched Wade's shoulder. Wade jumped back, startled, stifling a cry. Joe looked down and saw that Wade's cock was also stiff as a board inside his tight jeans. He knelt and hastily unbuttoned Wade's fly and extracted the young man's prick. There was a pearl of precum shimmering or the cockhead. Joe licked it off, then licked Wade's cockhead. The young cowboy grasped Joe's shoulders and humped slightly into Joe's mouth. Joe quickly took Wade's cock in and sucked. His ears were filled, however, with the squeak of leather and wood just beyond the tack room door.

Wade pulled Joe to his feet and opened his fly, too. He knelt, Joe's cock in one hand, and moved his mouth over it, slowly taking the thick, throbbing flesh between his lips and sucking at it. Wade's head bobbed back and forth rapidly, his hands grasping Joe's hips.

Pulling Wade to his feet, Joe grasped the young cowboy's cock, his fingers caressing the warm flesh, pulling back the foreskin and teasing the piss-slit. Chills of excitement shot through Wade. Joe grasped Wade's neck and pulled his mouth close. There was a brief pause and Wade shoved his lips against Joe's, both of them shaking with desire.

Wade knelt again and took Joe's cock into his mouth. Joe suppressed a moan as Wade began sucking his cock. His thighs trembled. He turned his head and looked into the tack room to watch Bone plowing the hell out of Kit's butt. Wade sucked his throbbing prick passionately. Wade cupped Joe's balls, which he'd pulled out between the opening of his fly, and caressed them. Joe's cock spasmed inside his sucking mouth, and Wade felt a rush of excitement make his own cock jerk and bounce. He reached around with one hand and grasped Joe's ass cheeks, warm beneath his leans.

Joe allowed a soft moan as his fingers locked in Wade's curly black hair.

He looked down and watched that young mouth working on his cock and his pulse raced wildly. He turned his gaze once again to the peephole and watched Bone pumping that incredible cock of his in and out of Kit's butt. Damn, what a fuckin' scene! he thought. What a fuckin' cock!

Wade tried to deep-throat Joe's cock, as he'd seen it done, but failed.

Joe's leg tremors increased from the effort. Joe's attention returned to his saddle buddy. He was close, very close, to coming. He pulled Wade up, then knelt and began sucking the young man's cock with a lustiness which bordered on frenzy. Wade's belly shook with the powerful, erotic feelings which spread through it. The sounds from the tack room caught his attention and he peered through the hole.

He suppressed a loud moan. At the moment he looked through the chink in the door, Joe deep-throated him and Bone plowed powerfully into Kit's asshole, making that young man gasp loudly. Bone arched his back, so he could watch his cock plowing Kit's asshole -- a move which provided Wade with a spectacular view of the action. The sight of that huge prick moving in and out of Kit's obviously tight butthole was astonishing and highly erotic. Kit's asshole grasped Bone's cock so firmly that the outer ring of sphincter muscles moved in and out with Bone's thrusts.

Trembling with powerful sensations, Wade looked down as his rugged, handsome saddle buddy sucked his cock. He reached down, grasping Joe's hair, pulling his face toward his groin. Wade's cock slipped down Joe's throat, and Wade's body jerked with pleasure. The feeling of teeth and lips pressing against his cock, the feeling of the throat spasming around his cock, thrilled him. A low, almost inaudible growl rumbled in his chest.

Joe pulled back slowly, swirling his tongue over Wade's bulbous cockhead.

Wade shook as Joe's tongue toyed with his piss-slit. Joe reached up and ran his hands over Wade's heaving belly, working upward to grasp the young man's hard pectoral muscles. Under the thin fabric of Wade's shirt, Joe's fingers found the peaked nipples and rubbed them. He began moving his head back and forth slowly, Wade's cock slipping in and out of his mouth. Wade's loins burst into flames of hot lust. He thrust forward, driving his cock against the back of Joe's mouth, almost driving it down the cowboy's throat.

The moans and groans from the tack room were louder, more passionate and someone announced he was coming. Wade knelt and kissed Joe

passionately, jerking Joe's cock hard and fast until Joe spewed his cum onto the barn floor. Then, quickly, Joe jerked Wade's cock off. They could hear movement inside the tack room which could mean that Bone and Kit were ready to come out of there. Quietly, but with haste, Joe and Wade left the barn and hurried to their room.

Behind their own door, they laughed and compared notes as they undressed in the dark and prepared for bed. They knew they'd have an early day tomorrow.

"Shit, I just couldn't believe the size of that cock on Bone," Wade said, stretching his muscles as he stood nude in the middle of the small room.

"Maybe that's why they call him Bone," Joe quipped, "cause of his boner."

"I guess." Wade walked over to Joe and put his arms around the older cowboy. "You got one hell of a bane, too, buddy."

"So do you," Joe replied, returning Wade's embrace. "Shit, cowboy, you nearly choked me there and us tryin' to be so quiet and all that." They kissed, warmly and longingly.

"Wished it'd been us fuckin' in the tack room," Wade said, running his hands over Joe's bare ass.

"Cowboy, if you think I kin git it up again this soon, you're welcome to what ever happens," Joe joked.

"Yeah. It is too soon," Wade sighed. "Ya know, if we had some of that stuff Bradley has, we'd be horny fuckers all the time."

Joe chuckled. "You don't need no help, Wade Marsh. Shit, boy, it feels to me you're already gettin' stiff again." Joe reached between them and fingered Wade's cock. "Teenagers!"

"Shit, man," Wade shot back, "you better enjoy it while you can. I ain't gonna be nineteen much longer."

"Well, I won't be interested then, I guess. You'll be too old," Joe joked.

"Aw, fuck you, man."

"That's the general idea, ain't it? You're still horny and ya want to fuck me. Right?"

Wade hugged Joe hard, his fingers digging into Joe's ass cheeks. "Right, ole man."

"Twenty-five ain't old. Besides, you ain't so much teenager as you think ya are." Joe's grip on Wade's rising cock tightened. "This here's a man's cock, Mr. Marsh and ya use it like one."

"Bend over."

"What?"

"Bend over, so I can git ya primed for a man-sized cock and some man-sized fuckin', Joe."

Joe stepped back slowly, his gaze dropping to Wade's half-hard cock, and nodded. He lay face down on his bunk, stretching out and shoving a pillow under his hips.

"Oh, yeah, that does look real invitin' Joe." Wade bent over and kissed each of Joe's ass cheeks. He kissed Joe's butt with more passion, while working his cock into a full erection with one hand. His tongue flicked out and over Joe's butt, then licked teasingly down the ass crack.

"That feels good, Wade, real good..."

In the barn, a shaky-legged Kit slowly pulled his jeans up and buttoned his fly. He'd been so thoroughly fucked that his own climax had almost caused him to black out. Bone patted his butt, grunted and walked out.

Damn, Kit thought, he always does this... like I was some damned filly in season and he was some blue ribbon fuckin' stud stallion. It was always the same, always and Kit was sure it would never change. He knew, deep within him, he didn't want it any other way.

Jesse slipped quietly into the room he shared with Kit, just as thoroughly fucked out after a session with Aaron. Sleep came quickly and easily to Jesse, so he didn't hear the moans and groans from next door where Joe and Wade were fucking.

And Chuk Loy was easing his ass down on an ivory dildo while puffing on a pipe, his cock bouncing, as he fantasized making it with Bone one day.

"Ahhh," he sighed and spurted cum onto his freshly waxed floor. But he didn't care.

CHAPTER FIVE

Wade and Joe were sent out on range duties the next morning and stayed out, with Jesse and Kit, for the next week without seeing another soul and never leaving Lazy S property. Not all of the Lazy S was grazing land, but parceled together, it created a large, sprawling ranch, with the only drawback being the lack of readily available water.

The land wasn't completely arid. The major source of water, however, was a river which began in the mountains, flowed across government lands, hooked through the Box A, and made another hook through the Lazy S.

During dry spells, the Lazy S was almost totally dependent upon the Parnell River for its water.

Kit and Jesse were soft-spoken companions on the range, easygoing and likable. Jesse and Wade were the same age almost to the month. Kit was the oldest of the group by two years. What the cause of the trouble between, the Lazy S and the Box A was, Kit and Jesse didn't know. During the last three months, tension had grown, tempers had flared, and just four weeks ago, Roy Poole, the Box A owner, had attempted to dam the Parnell. That would have given him a certain amount of control of the water available to the Lazy S. Aaron, unable to talk sense with the man, had gotten a court injunction and had stood by watching the sheriff, directing the destruction of the jerry-rigged dam.

Wade wanted to know what had happened between the two men, especially since Bradley had said that they were once friends and saddle buddies.

Jesse shook his blond head slowly, the campfire making red-gold highlights in it. "Don't make sense. Aaron and Roy been buddies since they was boys."

Kit stretched, suppressing a yawn, and scratched his chest. "Even the best of friends can have a fallin' out," he commented. "Shit, I'm sleepy.

I'm gonna turn in and leave you to gossip the night away." He pulled off his boots and slipped between his blankets, yawning heavily.

Jesse chuckled softly and turned his attention back to Wade and Joe.

"He's one for sleepin' his life away," he said, gesturing toward the already snoring Kit.

Jesse was surprisingly mature for one with such a boyish charm. The wispy mustache only added to his youthfulness rather than achieving its intended purpose of making him look older. His mouth was full and erotic.

His teeth straight, square, and white. In their time on the range, both Wade and Joe had noted that Jesse knew his business. He sat a horse like he was born on it, handled cattle like they were pets, and was a crack shot.

The nights had become warmer, although the elevation prevented the full force of spring, and the spring sun, from making itself felt. The nights weren't so cold that heavy clothing or extra blankets were necessary to stay comfortable.

Wade stripped down bare-assed to sleep between his blankets, as did Joe, who'd taught Wade the trick. Jesse had, at first, found it curious, but the second night out, had aped them and found it more comfortable. Kit still slept fully clothed despite their entreaties to try it.

"Catch my death," he'd muttered.

The campfire was dying back to coals, casting a dim glow over the three of them, all nude and sitting on their blankets. Overhead the sky was clear and filled with stars. A crescent moon was rising. The air was still and one could hear the bugs and the soft rustlings of night creatures in the evergreens and the tall grasses.

Jesse's eyes reflected the campfire, their deep blue dancing with a paler blue flame.

Babe, the huge cattle dog, lay with her head resting on her paws, her eyes bright and alert. She was just over a year old and still growing, saved from a litter Aaron's dog had sired. Jesse threw her the leg bone of the deer they'd shot that morning. She snatched it neatly out of the air, rose and trotted out of sight. Wade shook his head.

"Aaron sure has some strange notions sometimes," he said, indicating the dog.

Jesse nodded, leaning back on his elbows and spreading his long, slender legs. He eased his cock and balls. Yup, he sure nuff does. His ideas about sex might strike some even stranger.

Joe's and Wade's ears pricked up. "What, uh, like what?" Joe asked.

"Oh, like two men gettin' together's all right. I guess y'all know that already. He don't hold with love between two cowboys, though."

Wade felt his heart hump. Love? he thought. The notion of two men loving each other was startlingly new to him. Who'd have ever thought of such a thing? And if it were possible, why would Aaron Long be against it?

Joe cocked his head and gazed at Jesse. "But he's all for the sex, right?"

"Yup," Jesse replied, meeting Joe's stare openly. His cock had stiffened slightly, lengthened, and his mouth seemed to hold promise he intended to keep.

Wade was acutely aware that his own cock was stirring, beginning to swell. His balls moved, sending a chill of excitement through his loins.

"Well, now." Joe said, his voice low and throaty, "I'm all for that, too."

Wade glanced over and saw that Joe's cock was as rigid as a telephone pole, jutting up at an angle between his legs, the cockhead flaring and growing shiny. Wade took a deep breath as his pulse began to race.

Jesse rose, his cock jutting out from his golden bush, thick and hard, and stepped around the campfire. He stood between Wade and Joe and his cock

jerked and bounced. Joe rose to his knees, turned, and quickly took Jesse's cock into his mouth. Sighing, Jesse caressed Joe's head, his fingers tangling in Joe's long brown hair.

Wade got to his feet and stood beside Jesse, his hands roaming over the young man's back and chest. Jesse turned his head and Wade kissed him.

There was warmth and hunger on the blond cowboy's lips and Wade kissed him harder.

Jesse's fingers wrapped around Wade's prick and squeezed gently, moving slightly up and down its length. Joe reached out and caressed both of them, sucking Jesse's cock all the while. Shoving one hand between Jesse's legs, forcing him to spread them wide, Joe grasped Jesse's small, firm ass. Jesse groaned and humped slightly, driving his cock deeper into Joe's mouth.

Washing his tongue over Jesse's engorged flesh, Joe moved his head back and forth slowly, savoring the taste of cock. He sucked and licked with long, slow movements that had Jesse gasping with pleasure. He caressed Jesse's ass, his fingers slipping into the crack between his ass cheeks and exploring it lightly, teasingly. Jesse rocked his ass against Joe's fingers, groaning.

Joe sucked the blond cowboy's cock and teased his ass and asshole until the young man was groaning deeply.

Wade's cock spasmed in Jesse's fist. Jesse ran his fingers over Wade's cockhead, smearing the pre-cum over it. His fingers teased Wade's piss-slit, then eased down the underside of Wade's cock to his balls. They were hot and big and cum-filled. Wade moaned as Jesse cupped his balls.

Trembling slightly, Jesse felt his asshole begin to tingle, then burn, as Joe toyed with it. His cock throbbed inside of Joe's mouth. He eased down onto Joe's blankets, pulling the two cowboys with him. Joe resumed sucking his cock while Wade, following Jesse's pantomimed instructions, knelt over Jesse's head. Jesse pulled Wade's cock into his mouth and began sucking it rapidly and noisily.

Wade, on his hands and knees, trembled as Jesse sucked his cock. He turned his head and saw that Joe was rimming the blond cowboy's asshole.

A moment or two later, Jesse murmured, "Fuck me, fuck me," and pulled his legs into the air. Wade could see that the positions were clumsy. He knelt beside Jesse and watched, running his fist up and down his cock.

With his ass pulled up and his legs hooked aver Joe's arms, Jesse trembled with anticipation, his cock jerking and oozing pre-cum. Joe aimed his cock at Jesse's asshole and, with spit for lubricant, began entering the young cowboy's ass.

Wade groaned, as did Joe and Jesse. The sight was almost as exciting as being one of the participants and his own asshole tingled. Watching Joe's thick, long cock slipping into Jesse's butthole was a sight which almost made Wade come.

Jesse's asshole grasped Joe's cock. Jesse rolled his head from side to side, groaning, his eyes closed. Joe eased himself down, his cock deep inside Jesse's butt. Joe lay fully on Jesse, the young man's legs hooked over his elbows. He reached down and grabbed Jesse's hard butt and Jesse trembled.

"Oh, man," Jesse moaned. "Oh, jeez, you're a big 'un, Joe, a big 'un."

Arching up, Jesse pushed his butt against Joe's cock. Joe began pumping, shoving deep into Jesse's shithole. Joe pulled back slowly, then slammed home again. Jesse's mouth almost flew open as he gasped, and his eyes opened wide.

"Oh, God!" he gasped. "Ah, agh, yes!"

With the young man's nails clawing at his back, Joe fucked him, hard and fast, his own fingers digging into Jesse's ass. Joe readjusted Jesse's legs, hooking them over his shoulders and shoving Jesse's butt even higher into the air. Jesse's weight rested on his own shoulders.

Wade jerked on his cock, making his balls sway, and watched with growing lust. He spread his legs wide and sat back on his heels.

Bending over, he watched Joe's cock spearing in and out of Jesse's asshole. Joe's balls were drawn up against his crotch and he fucked at a slight downward angle. Wade had an unobstructed view of the action. He was breathless with excitement. He'd had no idea what an asshole looked like with a cock in it. It was fascinating to see and extremely arousing.

With a bust of lustful abandon, Joe began fucking Jesse wildly. The young man's heels kicked at Joe's shoulders while his groans became deeper.

"Aw, shit, man!" Wade groaned, watching the action close up. "That's the way, Joe, that's the way!"

A long string of pre-cum oozed from Wade's piss-slit. He wiped it away, smearing the gooey cum over his engorged cockhead. With his other hand, he caressed his own nipples, sending hot flashes through his body. He shuddered as the sensation shot through his groin, hot and sensuous.

Wade's asshole flexed and his balls burned. He felt a welling of emotion as he watched his buddy fucking Jesse. He knew what it felt like, Joe's cock plowing into him, and knew the pleasure Jesse was experiencing.

Strangely, he wasn't jealous. He envied Jesse's ability to fuck face-to-face, something he couldn't do. But, mostly, it was Joe's sexual abilities which aroused him the most.

"Damn, Joe, you're really plowin' him good!" Wade rasped.

"Come 'round here, Wade," Joe gasped.

Wade's head snapped up. Joe was changing positions, easing Jesse's legs down from his shoulders to around his waist.

"C'mere, so I kin suck your cock, Wade." Wade straddled Jesse's prone body, facing Joe. Joe leaned forward and claimed Wade's cock with his mouth. Then, sucking Wade's throbbing prick, he began fucking Jesse again. Moving his head back and forth, he sucked Wade's cock lustily. He found his rhythm and sucked and fucked both young cowboys with a growing abandon which had both of the young men groaning. Then,

thrusting deeply into Jesse's butt, he shoved his head forward and deepthroated Wade's cock.

Jesse reached up and caressed the back of Wade's legs, reaching farther until his fingertips touched Wade's butt. Wade groaned, his thighs trembling. Jesse's finger eased between Wade's legs and toyed with his balls. His cock spasmed deep in Joe's throat. The older cowboy groaned, pulled back and resumed his fucking and sucking rhythm.

"Both of you got jest about the biggest cocks I ever did see," Jesse groaned. "Damn, it's great."

Joe's head moved from side to side. His tongue worked on Wade's sensitive, swollen cock. Wade looked down and could see brief glimpses of Joe's tits, peaked and ultrasensitive, but he was unable to reach them.

He watched Joe's lean hips pumping and envisioned the sight of his buddy's thick, hard cock thrusting into Jesse's widely stretched asshole.

He shivered.

Joe was close to coming, but was holding back, wanting both of the nineteen-year-old cowboys to come with him. He plunged his cock into Jesse's hot shitter, bringing all three of them closer and closer to climax. Jesse's asshole flexed powerfully around his thrusting cock and Joe moaned around his mouthful of cock.

"Come in me, Joe," Jesse groaned, wiggling his ass. "Aw, man, come in me..."

Joe pumped his hips and moved his head faster, fucking ass and sucking cock for all he was worth. Jesse squirmed and Wade trembled.

Jesse's cock had been oozing pre-cum for some time. As Joe speared into him, his cock spasmed. Above him he could see Wade's ass bunching, and his big balls pulling up against his crotch. Suddenly, Wade gasped, thrusting his cock into Joe's mouth and spurted his cum.

Jesse could hear Joe gulping the hot, thick jism and he groaned and flexed his asshole.

Gulping Wade's hot cum. Joe shoved forward, taking Wade's spasming cock down his throat. Then he thrust his cock deeply into Jesse's quivering asshole and shot his load.

Jesse grasped his cock, jerked it several times, and sent his jizz spurting over his heaving belly.

They walked together to the rainwater pond a few yards away and washed off hurriedly. They quickly returned to their blankets and the warmth of the dying campfire.

Wade stretched luxuriously, settling his head against his saddle, and pulled a blanket loosely over himself. He closed his eyes, but he didn't drift off to sleep immediately, as he normally did. His mind went back to Jesse's statement earlier in the evening.

He didn't understand it or its implications, this business about love between two men. Was it possible? He knew about passion and lust, about the sexual sparks between cowboys. None of that was alien to his experience. But love? That was a notion new to him.

He'd seen the fierce competitiveness among cowboys for the exclusive rights to friendship with another cowboy. The term "saddle buddies"

didn't always carry a sexual connotation, but it usually did. In any case, a sexual relationship was kept quiet. Companionship was stressed socially.

But love?

His head buzzed with the implications when sleep claimed him.

Two nights later, Wade and Joe were back at the ranch. They heard at supper that there'd been some trouble while they were gone -- a fire in the barn, which Aaron was sure had been deliberately set. Gene, the old hand in charge of the horses and equipment, didn't agree, but Aaron wouldn't listen.

Alone in their room, with the prospect of a night's sleep on a soft mattress between clean sheets, Wade and Joe were quickly in bed.

"Joe?"

"Yeah?"

"What do you think about this love stuff?"

"Huh?"

Wade rolled onto his side, staring across at Joe's bed in the darkness, only able to see the white of Joe's arm against the dark blanket. "You know... what Jesse was talkin' about on the range that night."

There was a pause and a rustling as Joe rolled around. "It ain't nothin', Wade... nothin' to go on about."

"Tell me true, Joe... you ever hear of two guys like that?" Wade's heart was thumping something fierce against his chest and his mouth felt a little dry.

There was another pause. "Yup."

Wade waited, but it seemed that that was all Joe was willing to say.

"Well?"

Joe cleared his throat and shifted again, making the bed creak. "Couple of cowboys I knew down in Arizona a few years back said they was in love..." Joe snorted. "They'd given up ranchin', took to rodeoin', traveled around a while. Five years, they was together. Then one of them ups and runs off. Other one just 'bout died."

Wade frowned, feeling sad to hear this tale. "That's too bad."

"Yeah. Buddy was a nice feller. Didn't deserve anythin' like that. But I told him, that's what ya get for foolin' around with that there love business."

"You ever been in love, Joe?"

"Tarnation, boy, what do I have to do to get ya to let me sleep?"

Wade was silent a moment, listening to Joe settle himself, listening to the night sounds outside their open window. Were Kit and Bone in the tack room? he wondered. Were they in love?

"Well," Wade said softly, "I guess I'd be inclined to be quiet if'n I had a mouth full of cock."

"Well, get on over here, boy, 'cause it's hard."

CHAPTER SIX

Roy Poole had an inborn elegance, an open, friendly manner and a masculine demeanor. Still boyish in face and figure at thirty, his narrow, patrician face was haloed by curly brown hair and dominated by large blue eyes.

Wade and Joe met Roy at Bradley's where the rancher was having his mare fitted with new shoes. The two cowboys were making their first visit to Tyler since starting work at the Lazy S. It was payday, and their day off. They'd driven into town to do some needed shopping, but a night in town was the underlying motivation. Bradley performed the introductions when the two cowboys came around to the forge...

"Oh," Roy said, "you're the new hands at Aaron's." He shook hands with them. "Welcome to Tyler." His grip was strong and sure his gaze was steady and confident.

"Nice little town," Wade commented, warming to the man instantly. There was an openness about Roy that Wade liked while finding it almost disorienting.

"Yes, it is," Roy said, nodding, "and it's going to be a big one, one of these days. Mark my words. That is, we hope so. That blasted state road department can't seem to build a decent road out here and we're fifty miles from the nearest interstate as it is!"

"Roy's big on interstates," Bradley commented dryly.

"Interstates are changing the country, Bradley, like the railroads did after the Civil War. Besides, no man's ever fought progress and won."

There was an exchange of looks between Roy and Bradley which Joe caught and realized that there was more to the conversation than might seem obvious.

"Look at the time," Roy said, glancing at his watch. "I knew I was feeling hungry. Would you boys like to join me?"

Wade and Joe accepted, both intrigued by the man. Wade was curious as to the real source of the troubles between Roy and Aaron. Joe had caught a look of sexual interest in Roy's eyes.

"Ya'll come back later and I'll brew up some of that Chinese tea of mine," Bradley called, winking.

"We'll do that," Joe said, "uh, if Mr. Poole would like it."

"Yes," Roy said. "I like tea. I even like the kind Bradley brews up." He grinned.

Roy was Joe's height, had good bones, and tended to be lean. If he'd been taller, he'd have been considered lanky. He moved lightly, with an almost feline grace. They ate at Molly's Diner, simple fare prepared with a loving and lavish hand. It seemed to Joe that the meal was somehow a bit better than the one he and Wade had enjoyed their first night in Tyler.

Some of the advantages of being with Roy Poole were obvious.

The talk was casual -- cattle, the weather, beef prices, water.

Afterwards, they walked back to Bradley's. The mare was ready, tied to a rail around back where Roy had parked his jeep and trailer. The mare wickered when she saw Roy, and he went over and stroked her muzzle affectionately, muttering to her. Wade liked a man who cared for his animals.

"I have to get back to the ranch tonight," Roy said over his shoulder.

"But..."

"Hey, there," Bradley called, cutting off Roy's last words. "C'mon in here. I got a few things ready."

Exchanging smiles, they obeyed Bradley's summons and were quickly seated around the table sharing a pipe. Wade felt the effect almost immediately, a light headiness and a warmth spreading through his loins. He glanced around the table at the other faces, wondering what they were feeling. He recognized immediately that special glow on Joe's face which announced his sexual arousal. There was a mysterious smile on Roy's face, his eyes hooded. Bradley was grinning, his eyes sparkling.

Roy rose from his chair, a hard-on obvious beneath his tight jeans, and began to strip, neatly laying his clothes on the empty chair. Wade watched, fascinated, feeling his cock getting hotter and harder with each of Roy's liquid movements. The rancher's body, lean and slim and strong, had a boyish look. The pale skin had a satiny smoothness. Wade rose and pulled off his plaid shirt, his gaze never wavering from Roy's body. Then he kicked off his boots and pulled off his jeans. Standing nude, Wade's hard-on jutted outward, the cockhead pushing from his foreskin.

Roy's eyes moved up and down Wade's body, focusing on his hard cock. His mouth formed an "O" and he knelt, leaning forward.

His tongue flicked out and touched Wade's cockhead. Wade was aware of the soft bustle from the other side of the table and looked up, seeing Joe and Bradley hastily stripping. But Wade's attention quickly returned to Roy when the curly-haired rancher licked his cockhead again.

Roy's cock, like his physique, was long and slender and hard. Roy's mouth opened wide and he sucked Wade's cock. Moaning softly, Wade thrilled at Roy's light, feathery technique. The suction and the pressure increased slightly as Roy began moving his head back and forth. Reaching up, Roy lightly touched Wade's belly, and then closed just as lightly on Wade's nipples.

"Unh," Joe rasped. Wade glanced over to see what was the cause of that strange sound. Bradley was bent double over the back of one of the chairs and Joe, kneeling, was rimming the blacksmith's asshole.

Wade groaned as Roy's sucking increased in intensity. Shoving his hips forward slightly and bunching his ass cheeks, Wade shivered as his cock

slipped deep into the rancher's throat. Roy pushed his head forward, pressing his lips against Wade's cock hair while his fingers rolled the cowboy's tits. The dual sensations met in Wade's belly and exploded, warmly and lustily.

A low, guttural groan rumbled in Joe's throat. Bradley also groaned as Joe's tongue washed over his sensitive asshole. The blacksmith shoved back, arching his spine like a cat in heat and writhed his ass against Joe's mouth. Trembling with lust, Joe pulled Bradley down onto the floor, upended his butt and ravished the man's asshole with his mouth.

"Agh!" Bradley groaned, throwing his legs over the cowboy's shoulders and humping upward. "Oh, yes, damn it, Joe, yes..."

Bradley's head rolled from side to side and low moans rumbled in his chest. Joe licked and sucked at Bradley's asshole, his strong hands grasping the man's waist. Bradley's knees were almost touching his chest and his hard cock bounced against his upturned belly, oozing pre-cum.

Urged on by the soft noises behind him, Roy worked his mouth more vigorously over Wade's cock. Wade stood with his legs spread wide, with a view of Joe and Bradley on the floor as well as his view of Roy.

Everything seemed to be in soft focus, and all of their bodies seemed to have a slight glow which was enhanced by the oil lamps. The corners of the room were in deep, velvety shadows. Their skin tones were warm, the shadow accenting rippling muscles. Their flesh had a sheen which was partly caused, by their sexual arousal.

Sighing, Roy took Wade's cock into his throat again. His own cock jerked and his pulse raced wildly. His hands began to roam over Wade's hard physique. He pulled back and ran his tongue over the cowboy's thick, hard cock. A shiver of excitement shot through him. He released Wade's hard-on and ran his tongue down its length, licked his cock hairs, and then his balls.

"Oh, jeez, Roy!" Wade moaned. "Oh, yeah, man, suck my nuts..."

Joe's thick cock spasmed and bounced. Bradley reached, trying to grasp it, his fingertips brushing across it. Joe's licking caused his tingling asshole to relax. A desire built powerfully within him.

"Ah, jeez, Joe!" he groaned, humping against the cowboy's mouth. "Ah, shit, man, that's good!" His cock spasmed and oozed, and he managed to get his fingers around Joe's prick.

Joe lavished his mouth and tongue over Bradley's asshole, a deep, rumbling sound in his throat. He could tell Bradley was ready. He grasped Bradley by the ankles and spread his legs wide and aimed his cockhead at the blacksmith's butthole. He shoved and, his cockhead slipped into Bradley's ass.

"Oh! God!" Bradley exclaimed as Joe's thick cock spread his asshole.

"Ahhh, yeah, cowboy..."

With a surge of passion, Joe shoved completely into Bradley, the blacksmith's asshole flexing spasmodically around his cock and his powerful body shaking.

"Gimme that big cock of yours, cowboy," Bradley rasped, his eyes wide.

"Oh, shit, fuck me!"

Humping hard and fast, Joe drove his cock deep into Bradley's grasping butthole. Joe quivered and gasped for breath, rotating his hips against Bradley's groin. Bradley acted as if he'd been sex-starved for months and months and was greedy for cock. A spasm racked his muscular body and he humped and ground his hips and butt against Joe's thrusts. Joe glanced up and saw Wade watching him and it spurred him on into a wild abandon.

"Fuck me, Joe!" Bradley growled, writhing beneath the cowboy. "Fuck me shitless!"

From where he was kneeling before Wade, Roy looked over his shoulder at Joe and Bradley. His breath seemed to catch in his throat. He glanced up at

Wade and recognized the expression on the nineteen-year-old's face, and a smile flickered across his mouth. He rose, turned and bent over, grasping a chair for balance, and spread his legs. Wade stepped up behind him, spit on his cock, and pressed it against Roy's asshole. His gaze rose and met Joe's. He was riveted by the expression in Joe's eyes.

Wade's cock began to slip into Roy's butt. There seemed to be a kind of silent communication exchanged between Wade and Joe, each feeling what the other was feeling -- cock fucking ass.

With a gasp, Wade dropped his eyes and shoved deep into Roy's shithole.

He held the rancher's narrow hips lightly, his pulse pounding in his throat. He watched his thick cock plowing Roy's butt, shiny with spit and ass juice. Roy moaned and, rocked his butt slightly under Wade's thrusts, and bent further over until his face was almost touching the chair's seat. Pale hairs grew between his asscheeks and around his asshole.

Reaching back, Roy spread his butt cheeks wide. Wade thrust into him as far, as he could and ground his belly against Roy's ass. The rancher groaned, his asshole flexing, and humped back, rotating his butt in counter rhythm to Wade's movements. He moaned as Wade pounded in and out of him, his slim legs trembling.

"That's it, cowboy!" Roy moaned. "Fuck me deep and hard! Deep and hard!

Shove that big cock in there, and ream me out!"

Joe and Bradley had rolled over and Bradley straddled Joe's hips, rising and falling. Bradley's thick cock bounced, a string of precum dangling from it. His eyes were closed and his head thrown back, his mouth agape.

A vein in his neck throbbed visibly. His up-and-down pumping motions increased, and the bounce of his big cock slapped against Joe's belly.

The sight filled Wade with an unbounded lust, and Roy's reactions and responses added fuel to his flaming desires. Wade grasped Roy's hips and

pumped for all he was worth, knowing that Joe was watching. Wade's insides quavered as his climax neared.

The room was filled with soft spoken words, cries, deeply satisfied moans and entreaties, underscoring individual passions and enflaming the mutual lusts.

Wade's butt bunched and he pounded his cock into Roy's ass. Roy groaned deeply, his pleasure obvious and infectious. He reached between his legs and touched Wade's thrusting cock.

"Ohhh!" Bradley rasped as he sat down on Joe's cock flexing his asshole, he rotated his hips, causing Joe to groan deeply and loudly. Then, keeping the cowboy's cock deep inside, he rocked back and forth, his balls scraping against Joe's belly. His cock spasmed and oozed pre-cum.

Joe reached up and pinched Bradley's swollen tits. Bradley shook powerfully and rocked hard and fast.

Wade's balls were hot, swollen, cum-filled. They swung as he fucked. Roy trembled under Wade's assault, and jerked his cock rapidly.

"I'm gonna shoot, Wade!" Roy gasped. "Oh, man, I'm gonna shoot! Come in me, Wade! Fill my ass with your cum!"

Pumping deep, Wade drove himself toward climax. His fingers bit into Roy's hips. His belly slapped against the rancher's lean butt. Roy humped back, his asshole quivering. His legs trembling, Wade thrust deep, gasped loudly, and shot his load. Jerking hard on his throbbing cock, Roy spewed his cum onto the floor, a deep, guttural moan ripping from his throat.

His lean, hard body was racked by powerful spasms which, in turn, caused his asshole to flex around Wade's cock.

Bending forward, Wade wrapped his arms around Roy from behind and bugged him tightly and warmly. Neither of them had much strength left in their legs, so they eased themselves onto the floor. Roy sat back in Wade's lap, the cowboy's hard cock remaining in the rancher's asshole. Roy twisted

around slightly and kissed Wade. Wade's cock jerked deep inside Roy and the rancher moaned, then smiled at Wade. Wade's arms tightened around the man and they sat that way until Wade's cock began to go soft.

Joe cried out as his cum spurted into Bradley's asshole and a moment later the blacksmith's cock spewed jism over Joe's belly and chest.

Bradley fell forward and writhed against Joe, his butt flexing.

Then, silence fell except for the sound of four pairs of lungs breathing deeply and then, as cocks and asses parted company, a quartet of moans.

They washed up at the trough, then settled again around Bradley's table.

Bradley lit a fire, produced some cold beer and packed his pipe again.

The conversation was general at first, interspersed with ribald comments and laughter. But Roy, by virtue of his college education and his continued reading, was soon talking about homosexuality, gay liberation, the history of male-sheep relationships, and the like. Bradley, simply by virtue of his extensive travels, was more familiar with the general subject. Joe, who'd traveled in the western states and who'd spent two years in the Army, wasn't completely ignorant of some of the things Roy spoke about. Wade, with an eighth grade education, knew nothing about the subject.

"The Malmukes," Roy said, "were a warrior nation where women were forbidden. They were raised from boyhood to be homosexual warriors. They ruled Egypt for centuries and were always victorious in battle."

Wade shook his head in amazement.

"It's history," Roy assured him. "But you aren't going to be taught certain details in your average school."

Even more remarkable to Wade was the Sacred Band of Thebes in Ancient Greece, an army of lovers pledged before the city. Even among certain of the American Indians, warriors who were also lovers were not unknown.

"Lovers?" Wade questioned. "You mean they loved each other... I mean, like in love?"

"Yes," Roy replied.

Wade frowned, struggling with the concept. "You mean they was in love and everybody knew about it and it was okay?"

"Yes."

Wade sat back, stunned by the information. It was difficult to accept what Roy was telling them. It seemed more like some made-up story.

"It's history," Roy repeated gently, reaching over and grasping Wade's arm.

"But why're people so against it now?" Joe asked. "If it used to be okay, why ain't it okay now?"

Roy shrugged, removing his hand from Wade's arm, and said, "I really don't know, Joe. I wish I did. Even homosexuals who should know better don't believe two men or two women can love each other just as fully and completely and wonderfully as a man and a woman. There's no more honor in it, like there used to be, I'm afraid. And worse, those who do feel love for one another, too often deny their own emotions."

Roy had dressed. He really did have to get back to the Box A. He left them with an open invitation to visit.

Wade's mind buzzed with the implications if men once loved each other openly, honestly and honorably. "Why can't it be that way now?" he said aloud.

"At the Box A, they can," Roy said as he left.

Later, before going to sleep, the three of them again sharing Bradley's large, old bed, Wade wondered what the real cause of the trouble between Aaron and Roy was.

"If anybody knows, it's Sheriff Larson," Bradley said through a yawn.

"They were all boys together."

CHAPTER SEVEN

They found Cris Larson the following Sunday sitting on a rock outcropping at the edge of the open range and the badlands. He was an extremely tall, lean, hard-muscled man, with broad cheek bones, warm brown eyes, and a bold nose. A thick, drooping mustache concealed his upper lip and accented the full lower one. A Winchester lay beside him. He was holding a pair of binoculars loosely in his large bony hands.

"Howdy, Sheriff," Joe called from below. Cris motioned them to silence, then indicated they could join him, but to do so quietly. After parking the truck next to Cris' Landrover, they did so.

Crouched together on the rock, Cris handed Wade the glasses and pointed to a tall shelf of stone several yards away. Wade placed the glasses to his eyes, focused, and his mouth opened. A mountain lion and her cubs were plainly visible. They couldn't have been more than a few days old and were greedily nursing. Wade passed the glasses to Joe.

"Been keepin' an eye on 'er," Cris whispered. "Don't want 'er to start ravaging the herds. Well, I know where she's livin' now, and why."

He led them down from the rack, strolling over to their parked vehicles.

He placed his rifle in a special boot on the Landrover's dash. "You boys lookin' for me?"

"Yup," Joe said.

"What can I do for ya?"

"Tell us 'bout Roy and Aaron," Wade said. "And why they're so all-fired mad at each other."

Cris chuckled, scratching the back of his head. "Well, that might take some tellin'. There's a spot a few miles from here where we can relax.

Follow me."

Deep green, stately firs concealed a rock lined pool which was fed by a small waterfall. They parked their vehicles side-by-side. Cris produced a bottle of whiskey, cheese and apples from his back seat. They sprawled on the deep pine nettle carpet beside the pool.

Cris took off his boots, socks, and shin and lay back, exposing his pale flesh to the sun. Wade and Joe followed Cris' example.

Birds rustled about in the branches overhead, unseen. A squirrel scampered along the ground and ran chattering up a trunk. A rabbit appeared from its burrow, then ducked back when Wade stretched and groaned. A light breeze, smelling of pine, stirred the branches.

"I'd say, right off," Cris began, "their trouble's over education. Roy's got it and Aaron ain't. Aaron's a proud ole son. Pass me that whiskey, Wade, when you're through. Now Roy don't lord it over him. That ain't like Roy at all. No, Aaron's just conscious of it. Envious, maybe." Cris took a long swig from the bottle and handed it to Joe.

Cris, whose age was between Roy's and Aaron's, had been their boyhood friend. Roy and Aaron had been inseparable. The families had accepted it with an easy grace. Roy, Aaron and Cris were the only boys in the area their age and there had been a spontaneous magnetism between them.

Aaron, by virtue of his age, had been the natural leader. But it had been Roy, the smartest member of the trio, who'd been the one who'd thought up their more spectacular escapades. Aaron had been the one who carried out their plans. Cris had been the good, loyal soldier, taking happily whatever fell his way. The sex, when it started, had been natural and easy -- Roy's idea, Aaron's execution, and Cris somewhere happily in the middle.

After Roy had come home from the Eastern schools, he had seemed changed, almost alien at times. He'd been to Europe. It had taken a year for the city gloss to wear thin enough to make Roy bearable again. He'd been full of ideas, but that wasn't new. It had been his notions about homosexual

liberation and human rights which had been disturbing and it had taken Roy time to learn to curb his tongue. Aaron hadn't liked the changes.

"Then, some time last year it seems to me, what had been an uneasy peace between them fell apart. There was an argument, I never heard the details, and Aaron hit Roy and stalked off white 'round in the mouth, those eyes of his blazing. It ain't been the same since and nobody can talk to neither one of 'em."

Wade wiped a drop of sweat off his ribs and shook his head slowly. His crotch itched from the perspiration and he scratched it. Cris' eyes cut quickly to him, then away.

"Too bad," Joe said. "They're both real nice folks."

Joe was lying face down on the ground, unaware of the quick exchange between Cris and Wade. Perspiration made his muscular back glisten.

"Yup," Cris agreed, his gaze slowly moving down Joe's back, then again quickly away.

"I'm hot," Wade said, rising and shucking off his jeans and jockey shorts.
"I'm gonna take a swim."

Bare-assed, he slipped into the cool water and swam to the far side where the waterfall splashed down. He stood under it. The rush of water felt good and somewhat sensual.

"That's a good idea," Cris said, stripping down. Then, with a whoop, he jumped into the pool.

Joe followed a few seconds later, also whooping at the shock of the cool water on his warm flesh.

Wade stood knee deep in the clear water, the waterfall splashing down across his shoulders. He'd watched carefully as Cris had stripped, admitting openly to himself his curiosity. The sheriff's tanned body had been surprise

enough -- he was tan all over. The shock had been Cris Larson's cock, which had to be as big as Bone's, or within a fraction of an inch.

When the lanky sheriff had stripped and turned to jump into the pool, his cock had been semi-hard.

Joe had missed that particular sight but was no less interested in the sheriff. He wasn't prepared for the size of the cock he accidentally touched when he joined Cris in the water. His murmured "oops" was really a disguised sound of delighted sexual surprise. His eyes had widened dramatically. Cris looked back at Joe without, seemingly, a trace of humor.

"It's big," Cris said dryly, "but Bone's is bigger." He paused for effect. "By a half inch."

Joe laughed and swain toward Wade, Cris following at an easy crawl.

"Lemme have a go at the falls," Joe said to Wade. "You check out the sheriff."

Grinning, Wade dove into the water and swam beneath the surface until he was next to Cris. He opened his eyes and reached out, grasping the man's cock and pulling on it so that the man was forced under. Thrashing, they surfaced, gasping for air.

"Why, you little dickens." Cris grappled for Wade.

Wade dived again, evading the lanky man's grasp, and swam quickly away, hoping the underwater route would hide his intended destination. When he surfaced, however, Cris was waiting for him. Whooping like an Indian on the war path, Cris grabbed Wade around the waist from behind and lifted him out of the water. Helpless as a babe in arms, Wade's limbs waved in the air. Cris tossed him toward the center of the pool and he landed with a big splash. Joe whooped with laughter, pointing. Wade surfaced, a grin on his face.

"Okay, okay," Wade said, laughing, "I give up, Mr. Sheriff!"

"Give up what?" Cris shot back.

"Uh-oh," Joe laughed, "He's gotcha now, Wade Marsh!"

"I give up tryin' to jerk your whang," Wade replied, "without your leave, Mr. Sheriff, sir."

Cris shoved himself up on a rock which projected over the water. "In that case, you have my leave to jerk my cock all you want."

The sight of his prick, almost fully erect now, was enough to make a Barbary Coast whore think twice. At least ten inches long and almost as thick as a fist, it rose majestically from between Cris Larson's hard, lean thighs. Wade gulped, but gamely swam toward Cris. Standing in the shallows, he found that the rock placed Cris at just the right height for a blow-job. Cris' piss-slit was large, mouth-like. Wade leaned forward and pressed his lips against Cris' cockhead. He heard Cris moan softly and felt the cockhead swell slightly.

His lips parted, wider and wider, and Cris' enormous cockhead slipped into his mouth, seeming to fill it completely. Wade's mouth washed over it. He pressed his head forward, taking in another inch or two of thick cock flesh and began warming to the action.

Joe swam over and stood beside Wade, watching his buddy's attempts to suck Cris' cock. He caressed Wade's neck and back with one hand, Wade's cock and balls with the other. His own cock rose to a throbbing hard-on as he pressed close to Wade's side, his eyes feasting on the sight of Cris' huge prick and Wade's mouth stretched around it.

Wade took Cris' thick cock in his fist and jerked it. Then, bending down, he licked at the sheriff's balls. Cris moaned, spreading his legs wide.

Wade's tongue laved over Cris' balls, his hand working around Cris' huge cockhead at the same time. Cris shoved his ass closer to the edge of the rock and leaned back on his elbows.

Staring at Cris' thick, ten-inch prick, Joe's heart beat faster and he sighed, "Jeez, what a cock!"

Pressing his face against the sheriff's warm crotch, Wade kissed and licked his crotch, asshole, balls and cock. He moved slowly, tasting the flesh as well as giving it pleasure. All the while, Joe's hands moved aver Wade's flesh, sensuously, helping rouse Wade's deeper passion.

Shortly, Joe's tongue was added to Wade's and both of them licked and sucked at the sheriff's widely spread crotch.

Joe was a knowledgeable cocksucker, but Cris' cock defied him. It was just too big. He tried his best, however, because he liked what he was doing. He could feel his own cock's hardness increase in direct proportion to his attempts to suck Cris' cock.

The light breeze died. The sun, almost directly over head, beat down, reflecting off the water's surface. It became hot and humid and they began to sweat. Their passion was not lessened. Instead, it seemed to increase with the temperature.

Cris gestured for Wade to climb up onto the rock. Joe glanced up, pausing momentarily, then quickly returned to sucking the sheriff's cock. Wade knelt above Cris' head and lowered himself down, gasping as the sheriff began to tongue his asshole. Wade's cock spasmed, bouncing up and down.

Cris wrapped his long, bony fingers around it, moving them slowly up and down while his tongue flicked over Wade's asshole.

"Ooohh," Wade moaned softly.

Following the sheriff's guidance, Wade pressed down against the man's mouth, and felt sparks flow upward from his butt. Cris used his lips, teeth and tongue on Wade's ass, licking and sucking and nibbling, as if Wade's butt were a banquet and Cris was a starving man. Wade shivered as hot flashes shot through him.

Joe began rimming Cris' asshole shortly thereafter, holding the sheriff's legs up and wide. He had the sheriff squirming with delight in short order. After thoroughly wetting down the sheriff's blond-hair-fringed asshole, Joe turned his attention to the man's heavy balls, sucking first one, then the other. All the while, Joe kept realizing that he had a special kind of buzz going, a humming within his mind, a sexual song he sang strictly for himself. From cockhead to asshole and back again, Joe gave Cris the best head he knew how to give. But the size of Cris' cock defied Joe's most determined, ardent efforts at a real blow-job, and he had to settle for sucking the cockhead, his fist working the rest of it.

It seemed enough for Cris, for he was writhing beneath Joe's expert ministrations. Joe looked up, seeing the hot erotic ecstasy on Wade's face. The nineteen-year-old cowboy pumped his hips back and forth across Cris' face, which was mostly obscured from Joe's view. Wade's cock, held in Cris' fist, looked huge from Joe's angle, the piss-slit dilated with a pearl of precum forming.

Joe returned to licking, sucking and nibbling Cris' widely spread crotch.

Cris writhed slowly and sensuously, his cock throbbing. To Joe's mind, Cris' cock was as hard as the rock upon which the man was sprawled. Joe could taste the pre-cum, pungent and promising. He looked and as the pearl formed, he licked it off.

Quivering, Wade groaned deeply as Cris' tongue probed the tender flesh of his asshole. His balls, resting on the sheriff's chin, were tender and cumfilled. His cock was throbbing and tingling, his breath coming, in gasps. He reached up and took one of his own nipples and rolled it gently. Fiery sensations flooded his body. He pressed against Cris' mouth and rocked gently.

For a moment, suspended in time, all three of them were trembling on the brink of climax. They paused, each trembling in his own way, letting the moment subside. Joe climbed up onto the rock, his cock jerking and oozing precum. Wade lay down, his eyes closed, his arms flung over his head, his hard-on resting thick and throbbing against his heaving belly. Cris sat up,

taking deep breaths, his mouth smeared with his own saliva, his thick cock jerking.

Cris turned his attention to Joe, who had sprawled next to Wade. Kneeling between the cowboy's legs, Cris bent over and flicked his tongue over Joe's nipples, trailing it over the man's chest and upward to lick his hairy armpits. Joe groaned deeply. Cris' cock and balls pressed against Joe's trembling thigh. With an ever mounting passion, Cris licked and sucked Joe's body.

"Want an around-the-world, cowboy?" Cris rasped.

Joe groaned and nodded.

"Relax, now," the sheriff said, "this is gonna be a good one."

Cris returned to the business at hand. Joe trembled slightly as Cris began. He concentrated on Joe's nipples first, which were, at this point, almost too sensitive to touch. Cris' mouth roamed the cowboy's body, licking and sucking and kissing every inch of flesh. Joe's passion burned within him and increased to insatiable lust.

Cris guided Joe onto his belly and worked on the cowboy's asshole. Joe groaned. A sensation like liquid fire seemed to rush through him. Cris licked, tongued and nibbled his asshole, then licked and sucked again.

Cris' fingers spread Joe's ass cheeks wide and he shoved back against the sheriff's probing tongue. Groaning deeply, Joe became fired up with lust, and his muscular body shook with the intensity of the sensations centered on and hi his asshole, radiating through his body.

Joe could feel his asshole stretch slightly as it relaxed under Cris'

tongue. Joe gasped loudly as the feelings of pleasure increased dramatically. His butthole seemed to stretch and stretch. It had become so relaxed, so pliable. Then the realization exploded in his brain --

Cris' cock was in his asshole!

Joe's body bucked up and down and then backward as he gasped and groaned.

Slowly, very slowly, Cris slipped his cock into the cowboy's rapidly flexing asshole. Cris had so carefully prepared it that Joe was completely ready. The cowboy shoved back, wanting that big cock, wanting it in him. Cris knew not to hurry the situation, knowing the effect of his huge prick. He'd wanted to fuck Wade, but had realized that the young cowboy was too inexperienced to be able to accommodate him. Then Joe's activities and, attitudes had revealed a more experienced man, one more in line with his own experience. As soon as he'd begun the around-the-world, he'd known for sure that Joe was the one. Setting a gentle pace, Cris held to it, despite the passion and lust he knew he'd aroused in Joe.

The gray-eyed cowboy shoved up onto his hands and knees, his muscular body undulating slightly and his cock jerking up and down and dripping pre-cum. Joe's body accepted what was happening, but his mind avoided the cloudy images flitting through his mind. Cris fucked him in this fashion for a few minutes, then gently eased Joe back down onto his belly and slowly lowered himself onto Joe's back. Cris' thick cock was still only about three-quarters of the way in Joe's butt. As Joe writhed under Cris, moaning almost continuously now, Cris slowly but firmly and without pause entered him completely. Joe gasped loudly but did not protest. As Cris'

cock slid home, Joe's head snapped back and he emitted a cry of surprise and total lust.

Cris' strong hands grasped Joe's shoulders firmly. Then, his heart pounding, Cris began fucking Joe. His slow, languorous thrusts built their mutual passion. Joe, surprised at his own reactions, released the last shreds of inhibition and surrendered to the sensations which overwhelmed him.

His asshole quivered as Cris gently thrust in and out. He reached behind and held the sheriff's pumping ass lightly, thrilling at the feeling of power in the man's butt. Joe groaned, feeling his asshole burn wonderfully. He writhed as Cris pumped and plunged into him deeply and powerfully.

As Cris' pace increased, his belly slapped lightly against Joe's ass. His cock seemed to become harder with each stroke, his passion growing as wild as Joe's. The pace increased, the thrusts becoming more powerful. It seemed to Joe that Cris' cock filled him completely, and that made him shake with a passion and a need beyond his experience.

Cris slammed into Joe, emitting a deep, rumbling growl. Joe cried out, feeling Cris' cock spasming deep within his shitter. Joe flexed his asshole. Cris jerked and gasped as his cum spurted.

Crouched a few feet away, Wade jerked his cock until his jizz spurted onto the rock. He was assailed by intense feelings of pleasure and contradictory emotions of envy and jealousy which he did not understand at all.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Bone and Jesse had ridden in reporting some calves slaughtered. Aaron had packed and had chosen Wade to go with him. Two other cowboys were sent to a line shack five miles distant from the one which Aaron and Wade occupied. Whatever had killed the calves was going to be found and stopped.

The line shack was a one room affair with a pot-bellied stove and no windows. Crude bunks lined one wall. Rough hewn split logs provided benches and a table. There was a corral and lean-to stable behind the shack. Water came from a trickle of a creek a few yards distant which dried up too easily in the hottest weather.

Wade and Aaron arrived dusty, hot and tired, having ridden out from the ranch instead of driving. Aaron took the whole day to make the journey, seeming to inspect every foot of ground on the way. Wade longed for the luxury of a bathtub and almost groaned with disappointment when he saw the shallow creek.

"Let's get them quail cleaned and a cook fire goin'," Aaron said, dismounting. "Shit, it's hot and summer ain't even here yet." He led his big horse around back, shaking his head and muttering.

After cleaning the half-dozen quail they'd shot on the way out and cooking them, they stripped down and stood ankle deep in the cool water and washed. They scrubbed each other's backs and that seemed to relax both of them after the long, hard ride. They walked bareassed back to the line shack and sat outside on the split log bench drying in the setting sun. The line shack was stiflingly hot inside, more so with the stove lit and the quail cooking. A light breeze helped to cool and dry their bare skin.

Wolf trotted down to the stream and lapped water. Aaron had brought the huge animal along, claiming he could track a fly across glass. Wade had no reason to disbelieve Aaron's statement, and it had been Wolf who'd found the quail for them.

"What do ya think's gettin' them calves?" Wade asked.

Aaron shrugged his big shoulders, raking his fingers through his auburn beard and shaking the drops of water out. "Dunno. Could be a cat. You seen one, right?"

Wade nodded. He'd told Aaron about the mountain lion and her cubs as soon as the news had come to the ranch. Aaron had thought at the time that the lair was too far distant from the area where the calves had been found, but it was still a possibility.

"Too bad about that rain last night," Aaron commented. "There'd have been tracks, except for that. Now we gotta wait. Or git lucky with Wolf's nose for bad news."

Wolf loped back from the stream, water dripping from his coat and his tongue lolling, and curled up at Aaron's feet.

"Ain't that right, boy?" Aaron said to the huge dog. Wolf looked up at him, cocking his head to one side as if he understood. "Now, you jest sit there, boy. Too hot for cuddlin' a fur ball like you." Aaron chuckled.

Wolf snorted and moved over by Wade and sat staring up at the young cowboy.

"Oh, all right," Wade said, reaching out and scratching the big animal's head. Wolf then lay down, content, and Wade laughed softly. "Acts like a puppy."

Aaron ran a big hand over his still damp chest. "There's puppy in all of us, no matter how old we git." His voice was rich, like chocolate. Wolf raised his head and looked at him, his tail wagging. Aaron sighed.

"You miss him, don'tcha." Wade glanced at Aaron then away.

"Who?"

"Roy."

There was a silence which Wade dared not break. A cooling breeze stirred the grass, feeling good on their bare, damp flesh. It was so quiet at that moment that Wade could hear the quail cooking inside the line shack... and his own pulse.

Aaron gazed up at the magnificent dome of sky, cloudless and a deep indigo blue. "Wyoming's a crazy place. Plenty of water, but all in the wrong places."

Aaron Long was a handsome man. The beard softened his features, making him appear cuddly at limes. Like now, Wade thought, his pulse taking a leap. He was a desirable man... Wade wished his experience was greater.

Maybe then he'd know what to say, what to do.

"Yeah. I miss him."

Wade turned his head slowly. For a moment, he'd have sworn there had been a tear glinting in Aaron's eye. "I met him, ya know, last week at Bradley's."

Aaron was a study in contrasts and paradoxes. Wade had seen him wrestle a steer to the ground as easily as another man would handle a calf. Other times, like now, he looked so vulnerable and tender it made Wade's heart ache. Wade didn't understand it at all. Joe was a nice man, but there was nothing about him that Wade would term tender or vulnerable. And then there'd been O'Malley -- a man like stone.

In Roy Poole, there had been strength of character and conviction, and a toughness, all overlaid with the attitudes of a gentleman and an unforced easiness. It seemed the opposite was true of Aaron Long. Wade glanced away and studied what promised to be a magnificent sunset.

"Stubborn sod," Aaron muttered.

"Who?"

"Roy Poole."

Wade turned back, his bare butt raking across the bench. Aaron stared at the sunset, his big hands placed on his thighs, his thick cock hanging over the bench's edge. The light caused his auburn hair to catch and hold gold and flame hues, warming his flesh tones. Wade felt a stirring in his loins, a warming in his chest, the combination of which was both arousing and confusing. He realized that he wanted to have sex with this big man, and he wanted to comfort him, too.

Sensing Wade's attention, he turned his head slightly, their gazes locking. Unspoken invitations were sent and received and agreed to. They rose and stepped into each other's arms, their mouths quickly pressing together. They embraced, their lips searing and demanding, gentle and strong.

The smell of soap clung to their hair and skin and soon mingled with the musk of desire. Aaron fetched a blanket and spread it on the grass. They lay down and again embraced. Their hard-ons throbbed between their bellies.

Wade sighed as Aaron's fingers passed lightly over one of his nipples. It began to pucker, stiffen, become ultra-sensitive. Aaron leaned over and flicked his tongue across one nipple. Wade squirmed, moaning softly as the man's beard scraped against his flesh. Aaron pressed his lips around the nipple and sucked, his work-roughened hand sliding down Wade's belly.

"Oh, Aaron," the young cowboy moaned as the rancher's fingers wrapped around his hard-on, "suck me hard."

Wade's cock was rock-hard and hot. Aaron's hand moved slowly up and down the thick shaft, and his mouth sucked harder on Wade's nipple. Wade's flesh was warm and sensitive.

Aaron's fist rubbed across Wade's cockhead. He sucked fiercely on the cowboy's tits, one then the other. Wade's moans deepened, becoming louder, his guttural sounds lost in the vastness of their surroundings.

Their passion and longing mounted. Wade spread his legs wide, feeling his balls hanging against his crotch, large and hot. Trembling, Aaron eased his hand down and grasped Wade's nuts, caressing them. Wade shoved his tit

hard against Aaron's mouth and gasped loudly as Aaron's fingers brushed across his asshole.

Moistening his middle finger in his mouth, Aaron returned it to Wade's asshole, massaging it until it began to relax.

"Oh, God," Wade moaned, shoving against Aaron's probing finger. A tremor racked his body.

Moving into him, Aaron felt the cowboy's muscular body responding with passion as his asshole flexed around his probing finger. Raising his head, Aaron claimed Wade's mouth, his tongue shooting between the cowboy's lips. Wade jerked his legs up and wide, and pulled Aaron on top of him. Wrapping his legs around the bit man's waist, Wade gasped softly.

Aaron's thick cock slipped down and pressed against Wade's crotch.

"Damn, cowboy," Aaron said, "you're hot."

"Yes," Wade whispered, trembling slightly and hugging Aaron tightly.

"Hotter than a pistol for you, Aaron."

Using spit, Aaron slipped his throbbing cock into Wade's asshole slowly and easily. Wade's asshole relaxed a little, allowing inch after inch of cock inside. When Aaron was a little better than halfway in, Wade gasped loudly and humped up, taking Aaron's cock in to the root. Groaning and shivering, Wade tightened his legs around Aaron's waist.

"Oh, God, you're so big!" Wade groaned, his asshole burning and flexing, still accepting Aaron's cock and not yet completely relaxed.

"Oh, Jeez," he sighed, feeling his asshole slowly beginning to relax.

"Oh, yeah, Aaron, it's good, it's okay, now! Go on and fuck me!"

Holding Aaron's cock firmly in his asshole, Wade ran his hands up and down Aaron's broad back. The big rancher began moving his hips, thrusting gently in and out of Wade's butthole. Wade reached down and grasped

Aaron's ass cheeks. They were hard and hairless. The feel of them made Wade's glowing passion grow.

Aaron drew his throbbing cock out an inch or two and, moaning softly against Wade's neck, thrust back into him. He kept up a slow, steady, deep thrusting, fucking Wade's asshole. He could feel the heat and increasing pliability of the young cowboy's shitter. He moaned as his excitement increased. He gasped, his pulse pounding.

"Like that!" Wade groaned. "Like that... deep and slow, Aaron! Yeah, hard and deep! Ahhh! Your cock's hard as a rock and hot! Oh, damn, it's big!"

Suddenly changing the rhythm, Aaron began fucking with quick, fast strokes. Wade's nails bit into Aaron's buttcheeks as a loud gasp ripped from his throat. Aaron slammed against Wade's tight, upturned ass, his balls swaying and his cock tingling.

Writhing against Wade, Aaron thrust hard and deep, rotating his hips.

Wade's legs squeezed him, his heels kicked at his butt. The young cowboy released Aaron's ass cheeks and grasped his rippling back. Wade humped up and down against Aaron's ass and began trembling.

"Aw, man!" Wade gasped. "Aw, Aaron, it's so deep inside me! I kin feel it throbbin'!"

Aaron instantly began fucking again with an increased pace. His thick cock moved in and out of Wade's now relaxed, but grasping, asshole.

Feeling the cowboy's cock jerking between their bellies, Aaron fucked all the harder, all the faster, sensing that Wade's climax was near.

"Yes, oh, yes!" Wade panted. His breath came in hot, ragged bursts as he humped his butt upward, his hands grasping Aaron's back.

The breeze died and the heat of the day still remained. They were sweating profusely. Their lubricated bodies slid against each other.

"Aw, Wade, boy, you're so damned hot!"

Aaron knelt, holding Wade's legs in the air, and watched as his thick cock moved in and out of Wade's asshole. With a groan, he shoved deep, closing his eyes, his mouth agape, and ground his belly against Wade's crotch. A tremor racked his body and he groaned loudly.

Kneeling back on his heels, Aaron pulled Wade into his lap. Reaching around, the rancher grasped the cowboy's ass cheeks and spread them. His fingertips touched Wade's asshole, tantalizing both of them. Aaron gasped at the sensation of his hard, throbbing cock penetrating Wade's hot, stretched asshole.

Wade moved his ass up and down on Aaron's cock and moaned. He held onto Aaron's broad shoulders and writhed his hips. His hard-on jerked back and forth between their bellies, pre-cum oozing from his dilated piss-slit.

Wade arched his back, closed his eyes and pumped, taking Aaron's cock to the root, gasping and trembling as he did so.

Aaron held Wade's butt, keeping his ass cheeks spread. His fingers touched the spot where his thick, eight-inch cock penetrated Wade's asshole and he thrilled at the sensation. And as Wade increased the fervor of his movements, up and down, rotating, moving back and forth, Aaron's climax came closer and closer.

"Ahhhhh!" Wade cried out.

Cum spurted from Wade's cock. He continued pumping his hips, driving Aaron's cock in and out of his rapidly flexing asshole. His cum splattered against Aaron's belly as well as his own. The thrill of coming overwhelmed him, added to the pleasure of a cock in his asshole. He shoved down hard and rotated his hips, shivering as fiery sensations radiated from his butthole and balls and cock.

Aaron humped upward, driving his cock deep and hard into Wade and his cum spurted. Their hot, sweaty bodies locked together as their mouths met hungrily. Wade's rotating hips slowed, but did not stop, as his cock continued to spasm between them and his asshole continued flexing around Aaron's spewing cock.

"Goddamn, cowboy!" Aaron moaned, trembling and thrusting, his voice thick as honey. "Oh, Goddamn, cowboy!"

A shudder racked Wade's body and he hugged Aaron tightly. It had been the first time he'd fucked face-to-face, he suddenly realized. His climax had been intensified a thousand fold, or so it seemed. It had been very special thrill, he realized, to see the expressions which flooded Aaron's face and eyes during the process. How much he'd missed! Wade's pulse still pounded, his cock was still rock-hard, and his balls felt as if they were as full of cum as ever.

"You ain't goin' soft, are ya?" Aaron whispered, his hands caressing Wade's butt.

"No, I ain't," Wade replied, his voice husky.

"Good, 'cause I ain't neither."

Wade smiled, happy that his passion wasn't dissipated nor was Aaron's.

Slowly, Aaron removed his cock from Wade's butt.

"Fuck me, now," the big, bearded man rasped.

He lay back and spread his legs, holding them in the air by the knees.

His asshole was fringed with curly dark auburn hairs, damp and dark with sweat. Wade entered him easily and quickly and both of them groaned.

"Stan easy, now," Aaron said, "'cause it's been a long time." He shuddered as Wade's cock spread his asshole wide. "Oh, man, get in there deep and... oh, yes..."

Wade slipped into him, hard and fast, feeling a second climax building quickly. Aaron closed his eyes, rolling his head from side to side as Wade fucked him.

They both came a second time and it seemed much more intense than the first time, if faster in arriving.

"That was a first," Aaron whispered.

"Yes," Wade replied softly, wondering how Aaron had known.

Aaron looked at Wade curiously, unable to read the young man's expression in the dimming light. "I meant only Roy's ever done that before... fucked me."

"Oh!" Wade then explained what he'd meant and they laughed quietly together, a bond building between them.

"Well, maybe some of Roy's ideas ain't so crazy after all," Aaron on commented as they headed for the creek a second time.

"Like what?"

"Like love, I guess." Aaron shrugged.

"Like love and sex ain't always the same thing. Roy sez that two guys kin love each other, but it don't mean they can't have fun on the side, too."

To Wade, it was another startling idea, just as startling as the notion that two men could love each other. Wade shook water from his hair.

"But Roy reads too many damned books," Aaron said, not sounding at all angry.

Wade wasn't giving Aaron his whole attention. He was remembering what Roy had said about the Sacred Band and about the great heroes who'd been lovers. But how did it all apply to modern times, he wondered. He decided he'd just have to talk with Roy some more and find out what it was all about. What the hell was gay liberation, anyway?

"By the way," Aaron was saying when Wade's attention fully returned, "a friend of ours is coming for a visit."

Wade's eyebrows shot up. He didn't have any friends who'd be coming for a visit. "What?"

Aaron chuckled. "Well, maybe I should said an acquaintance." They began walking back toward the line shack, the aroma of the quail drifting out to them and making their stomachs growl. "Got a letter from ole Jud Hawk.

Sez he's fed up with livin' on the reservation and is lookin' for work.

Turns out, the city council's finally lettin' Cris put on a fulltime deputy, so I got 'em in touch with each other. He'll be here, oh, in three or four days, I reckon. C'mon, let's eat. I'm starvin' and that quail smells jest right."

Wade grinned as he followed Aaron into the line shack, thinking about the meeting between Jud and Cris. That, he thought, is gonna be come meetin'.

They never did finish the quail. They heard the mountain lion's cry near by and Wade growled and bristled. They spent half the night trying to find the cat.

CHAPTER NINE

Jud Hawk pulled his dusty van into the parking place in front of the jail. He felt lightheaded for several reasons -- driving straight through to Tyler from the reservation was one, having sheared his long, hair was another. The back of the van was packed with all of his worldly belongings. He'd decided he was through with reservation life, and whether he got the job as deputy in Tyler or not, he wasn't going back.

He took a deep breath and reached for the door handle. He paused when he saw a tall, lanky blond man come out of the jail and walk toward him.

Cris Larson's belly felt funny from the moment he saw Jud Hawk sitting in the dusty blue van. Aaron had told him little about Jud outside the basic facts -- Indian, Air Force veteran, Reservation policeman. Cris hadn't been prepared for the bulk of the man, his rugged handsomeness, no? That special look they exchanged. A gay Indian?

"Howdy," Cris said, approaching the van, extremely conscious of Jud's quick approving appraisal. He extended his hand as Jud climbed down from the van. "I'm Sheriff Cris Larson. You must be Jud Hawk."

Jud took Cris' hand, liking the size and the strength of it. "I guess I must be," he joked, a grin lighting up his face.

"I'm real glad you could come so quick. C'mon in."

"I usually don't," Jud muttered loud enough for Cris to hear. His grin widened when he noticed Cris' reaction to his words. Good, he thought, a gay sheriff.

The jail was old, almost as old as Tyler itself. The front room was an office. The back room contained two small cells and an open shower-john.

There was a narrow, steep staircase to the second floor where the sheriff had originally lived.

"City's gonna build a new jail this year, air conditioned and all that,"

Cris apologized. "And turn this place into a tourist attraction." Cris chuckled and shook his head. "We ain't got no tourists, though."

"Lord have mercy," Jud said, "this place is as old as the Alamo."

"Jest about," Cris agreed.

Their eyes met again, this time their gaze holding a bit longer before drifting away. Jud examined the old room, very aware that Cris was giving him the once over. Turn about's fair play, he thought, feeling his loins warming.

"How's ole Aaron doing?" Jud asked, returning his gaze to Cris. "And Roy?"

"They're fightin'."

"I heard," Jud said, his gaze slowly dropping to Cris' crotch where the worn jeans accented the man's basket -- practically outlined it.

Cris cleared his throat. His balls had begun to stir, and that special tingle had shot through his cock. "Uh, I ain't got a whole lot to offer ya right now."

"I don't know about that, Sheriff," Jud murmured.

Cris cut his eyes away, then back to Jud, quickly. "Uh, but I kinda got the upstairs cleaned up for ya. It's, uh, this way." He led the way up the narrow, old stairs. "I kinda figured it'd do until you got a place for yerself."

The two rooms upstairs had never been fully converted to modern times.

There was electricity, but the plumbing was antique at best. An iron stove for heat and hot water sat in one corner of the front room. There was a hand pump on a counter with a galvanized sink. And there was an old, brass bathtub beside it. In back was the bedroom, and it contained a double bed, dresser and a desk. The furniture in the front room consisted of a bridge table, two folding chairs, and a broken-down old sofa.

Cris shrugged apologetically. "Ain't much."

"Beats a teepee," Jud joked. "Sheriff..."

"Uh, call me Cris."

"Cris..." Jud smiled. "I'm in powerful need of a bath. How do ya work this thing?"

"Oh!" Cris was startled, yet happy to accommodate Jud. "Well, first you... aw, hell, it'll be faster and easier if I show ya." He got kindling from a box near the iron stove and began making a fire.

Jud fetched a suitcase from his van. By the time he returned, Cris had a fire going in the stove and water set on top to boil. From the cupboard over the sink, he produced a towel, a wash cloth, and soap.

"I, uh, brung a few things over from the house for ya. I didn't know what ya might need."

Cris turned to find Jud nude, standing in a relaxed posture as if waiting for Cris' gaze. The indian's face was expressionless, but his dark eyes seemed huge and full of meaning. Cris was uncertain for a moment as to what to do. Jud broke the spell by shifting his weight, a movement which caused his thick cock to sway. Cris quickly looked down at Jud's groin, but did not quickly look away.

"I'll get some water into the tub," he said, his voice going thick. "I'll warm it up when this stuff boils."

"Okay." Jud walked slowly toward the old bathtub, knowing how sexily he walked, how his cock and balls moved, how his hips took on a bit of action. He noticed that the bulge in Cris' jeans had grown considerably in a very short time. Shit, he's hung! Wisps of steam came from the pots on the stove.

Cris poured water from the pump into the tub. Jud stepped into it. "Oh, that feels good already," he groaned. He bent, over and took handfuls of water and splashed it over his body, gasping at the coldness -- and at the

knowledge that Cris had to be giving him the once over. His cock began to thicken, lengthen, and his balls pulled up tight against his crotch.

With another bucket of water in hand, Cris turned to Jud and paused. He realized that he was being invited to take an inventory of the indian's body, so he did, enjoying everything he saw. His cock began to stiffen.

Jud turned slowly, letting water from his cupped hands run down his body, his gaze meeting Cris' and a grin spreading over his face.

"You've never seen a naked Indian before, have you, Cris?" he joked.

"Actually... no." Cris was sure he was about to blush, and didn't understand why.

"We're hung just like white men," Jud kidded.

Cris let his gaze dwell on Jud's thickening cock. "In some cases, Jud, you're hung bigger."

Jud took the soap and the wash cloth, lathered the cloth, then offered it to Cris. "Would you do me a favor, Cris, and scrub my back for me. I just can't seem to reach it."

"Uh, sure." Cris took the cloth and quickly began moving it over Jud's broad, muscular back. His eyes drifted down and feasted on the indian's small, tight butt -- just the kind of ass he liked best, just the kind of ass that turned him on. "Always glad to help," he murmured.

"I'd bet you're a really big help," Jud murmured in reply. His cock was rising fast and he hoped Cris' was, too. A soft moan of pleasure drifted from his lips as Cris ran the soapy cloth over his back.

Cris paused briefly upon hearing Jud's comment, his heart beginning to beat rapidly, and his cock swelling powerfully. He ran the cloth down Jud's back to his butt and slipped the cloth between the ass cheeks. He soaped Jud's asshole lavishly and tenderly.

"I guess I've been called that, too," Cris said, his thick voice becoming slightly raspy.

"What do you do about it?"

"Depends on who's doin' the talkin'."

Jud sighed and turned slowly to face Cris. Jud's cock was hard, jutting outward from, his black pubic hair, thick and throbbing. His eyes held a warmness that was unmistakable, his mouth was parted. "I'm talkin', Cris." Jud's voice was husky.

Cris stood a moment, openly and boldly looking at Jud -- his mouth, his eyes, his hard-on -- and gave a brief nod. His cock was erect and straining against his jeans and he warmed as Jud's gaze dropped slowly and stared at it.

"Lemme get some water to rinse ya off," Cris said softly. He fetched warm water from the stove and poured it over Jud enjoying the sight of it running over the indian's muscular body.

Jud stepped out of the bath and toweled off, Cris stepped back and stripped quickly, pleased when he heard Jud's soft gasp when his cock sprang free.

"Goddamn, Cris," Jud breathed, "I've never seen a cock like that...

except on a stallion." A smile spread over his face. He knelt and took Cris' cock into his mouth, sucking hard and fast.

Jud's hair, freshly washed and smelling of soap, lay damp on his skull, blue-black and shiny. His muscular shoulders were a deep copper hue, a color similar to Cris' all-over tan, but darker and richer. Cris moaned as Jud's tongue poked at his piss-slit.

"Aw, man," Cris moaned, "let's get onta the bed."

Cris led Jud into the adjoining room. The sheets were cool and inviting and a gentle breeze cooled the room through the two open windows. They cased themselves onto the double bed and embraced. Their limbs entwined and

their mouths met in a yearning kiss, their cocks pressed between their bellies. The fevered intensity of Jud surprised and delighted Cris, arousing him further. Slowly, they began to writhe, moving their flesh one against the other. Deep-throated moans of pleasure rumbled in their throats.

The embrace became more and more passionate. Their mouths clung together.

As if trying to devour each other, they strained while guttural sounds rumbled in their throats and chests.

An intense shiver racked Jud's muscular body as he slowly slipped down and knelt between Cris' legs. The sheriff's horse-sized cock jutted upward, enormous and thick. Cris' cockhead flared larger than the shaft.

Jud pulled back the foreskin, bent over, and washed his tongue over it several times. Cris groaned and writhed, his belly heaving.

"Are you gonna come?" Jud whispered, his lips moving lightly over Cris' cockhead and his eyes gazing up to look at the man's face.

"Oh, no, not yet," Cris whispered, a shiver of pleasure rushing through him because of Jud's warm breath moving over his cockhead. "Not yet.

Don't worry 'bout that."

"Good," Jud said, kissing Cris' cockhead. Because this is a cock I want to suck a long, long time, he thought.

Jud took Cris' big cock into his mouth again, sucking gently. Cris' hips gave a small thrust. Jud relaxed his mouth as much as he could, sucking, moving his head slowly up and down. He savored the taste of cock flesh and the unique sensation of the cock's enormous size. His own cock jerked and bounced with excitement.

Cris groaned. It had been a long time since anyone had even attempted to suck his cock. Most men were put off by its size, afraid of it.

But Jud! He was a wonder! Cris chuckled softly. He reached down and took Jud's head between his hands and pumped slightly, very carefully, moving his cock in and out of Jud's sucking mouth.

"Oh, man!" Cris moaned softly as hot flashes shot through his balls.

Stretching and reining, not forcing the situation, waiting, getting peaceful within himself, Hawk shoved his head down, taking Cris' cock into his throat briefly. Cris gasped loudly, both from surprise and from pleasure, and released his hold on Jud's head, his legs suddenly trembling uncontrollably. No one, but no one, had ever even attempted such a thing. Cris' pulse raced, his heart thumped hard against his chest.

Jud sat back, gasping, a proud expression on his face. Cris pulled his legs up and wide. Jud looked down, seeing Cris' big balls and his hairy asshole. Trembling excitedly, hid shoved Cris' legs back, raising his butt, and pressed his lips to the sheriff's asshole. Jud's cock twitched and his pulse pounded as he began licking Cris' butthole, wetting down the curly hairs. As his tongue washed over the tangy hole, Cris moaned and shivered powerfully.

Pulling hid away, Cris swung a long leg over his head and slowly lowered his ass down onto Jud's mouth. Jud's tongue once again found his tingling asshole, licking and sucking at it. Cris reached back and spread his ass cheeks, rotating his ass slightly over Jud's tongue and mouth.

Jud's thick cock jerked against his hairless belly. His cockhead had pushed itself free of the foreskin, and looked like an enormous arrowhead. A pearl of pre-cum had formed at the piss-slit. Cris gazed down at it, trembling, and spread his ass cheeks even wider.

Washing his tongue over Cris' slightly stretched asshole, Jud felt hot rushes shoot through his body. He pointed his tongue and probed at the hot, wrinkled flesh which was slowly beginning to relax. He shoved upward, pressing his mouth against Cris' ass, and poked his tongue against Cris' asshole, as if trying to tongue-fuck it.

Alternating hot and cold flashes raced through Cris' Jean, hard body. He undulated, shoving against Jud's flicking, probing tongue. His huge cock jerked up and down. He gasped loudly, his thighs trembling.

Responding to an irresistible urge, Cris scrambled around, groaning deeply, and grasped Jud's hips. He raised them high. Jud groaned loudly as Cris began rimming his asshole. With an almost savage abandon, Cris sucked and licked Jud's asshole, while his huge cock jerked spasmodically. Whatever reserve Cris had had melted away.

"Ahhhhh," Jud moaned, low and guttural. "Yes, yes, Cris, eat my ass, man!

Eat me out! Yes!"

Jud trembled and his cock jerked as if ejaculating. His asshole flexed and burned. His legs waved helplessly in the air. His pulse pounded in his ears. He closed his eyes and red spots danced on the backs of his eyelids. Powerful rushes shot through him, from asshole to brain.

"Ahhhh," Jud rasped. "Fuck me, Cris, fuck me! Gimme that horsecock of yours! Mount me, man, and fuck me!"

Quickly, Cris lubricated his cock with spit and applied more to Jud's asshole. Then holding Jud's legs back and far apart, Cris slowly and carefully entered Jud's asshole. Cris' eyes flicked to Jud's face, then back down to the indian's asshole. He eased into Jud, making sure all was well. Jud reached down, grasped his own ass cheeks, and spread them wide, urging Cris to enter him fully.

Jud humped upward, driving his asshole onto Cris' throbbing cock. A loud, savage cry erupted from his vibrating throat and his body trembled while his rugged, handsome face flushed with a strange and wonderful rapture.

Taking Jud's moans and gestures to heart, Cris began fucking him lustily, not holding back as he usually did, but pounding his gut against Jud's butt. Jud demanded more. Leaning forward, using Jud's legs for leverage, Cris fucked hard with long, deep strokes, thrusting his big cock into the indian's butt to the root. Jud trembled, his eyes closed, and gasped loudly.

Never had Jud been so full of cock. Something erupted deep within him, something almost primitively mystic. He arched upward, driving his burning asshole against Cris' plunging cock again. His balls jiggled hard, almost painfully. His cock spasmed, sending long strings of pre-cum seeping down onto his belly.

Plowing hard and fast, Cris felt searing flashes shooting through his cock and balls. His cock had never felt so large, nor so welcomed. An intense pleasure swept over him. He looked down, trying to absorb with his eyes and mind what his nerve ends were telling him. Suddenly, Jud's cock spurted cum, spewing the thick, milky stuff over his belly and chest. Cris groaned and thrust deeply into Jud's churning ass, trembling and gasping, shooting his load.

Cris cried out, long and loud, his legs trembling, his cock spasming deep in Jud's asshole. Jud reached up and pulled Cris down on top of him, his mouth pressing hard against the sheriff's. All the while, Jud's butt churned and Cris' cock continued to spasm. They were both shaking from the intensity of their climaxes and the unspoken knowledge that something extraordinary had occurred between them.

They lay entwined for a long time, just holding each other, Cris' cock still inside of Jud's asshole, and still just as hard as when they'd begun. Cris was deeply moved by the experience, yet didn't know how to express his feelings except by gentle caresses and kisses. There was such an unusual glow on Jud's face, such a strange smile on his mouth. He felt that some unique bond had been formed between them, but he didn't know what it was exactly.

"Sheriff," a voice called from downstairs. "Sheriff!"

Cris groaned, "Oh, shit, not now."

Footsteps pounded up the staircase and into the front room. "Sheriff, you up here?" It was Bradley.

Before Cris and Jud could untangle themselves, the burly blacksmith burst into the bedroom. "Oh, shit!" he exclaimed, his eyes going wide for a

moment. "Ya gotta come quick, Cris, they're fightin' over at the livery."

CHAPTER TEN

Cris found Roy and Aaron ready to slug it out, being held back by Wade, Joe and Bone. When the sheriff arrived, they were still hurling insults at each other. Both of them had managed to land a blow on the other, but nothing serious. Egos and pride had been hurt more than anything else.

"All right, that's it!" Cris snapped, his voice cold. He turned to Jud, who'd dressed as hastily as he had and looked it, too. "Deputy, you take the little fella along." Cris turned back. "You're both under arrest."

Jud left with Roy, who was looking like a belligerent sheep. A few moments later, Cris followed with Aaron, who'd calmed down considerably.

Aaron had always been one to blow up and calm down quickly.

Cris left hid in the office to watch the store and marched Roy and Aaron up the stairs. He produced a bottle of whiskey and some glasses and poured them half full. The three of them sat at the bridge table and sipped a moment in silence.

"Now, you gotta choice," Cris said. "You kin talk your troubles over right now, git 'em solved right now, or I'm lockin' both of ya up and chargin' ya."

Aaron and Roy exchanged glances, both of them torn between embarrassment, anger, and a genuine desire to make up.

"I'm sorry I called you stupid," Roy said. "I was angry and when I saw you there in the livery, I just about busted my heart."

Aaron nodded, accepting the apology. He lifted the glass of whiskey and took a sip. His eyes never left Roy's face.

"And I also apologize for building that dam, or trying to. I really didn't think it'd harm your water supply, Aaron, or I'd never have done it."

Again, Aaron nodded, the hard line of his mouth beginning to soften. Cris eased out of the room and back down to the office, knowing somehow that his presence was no longer needed.

"I just get so angry with you sometimes," Roy went on. "The way you get your back up whenever I talk about progress, or something new that I've read about."

"It's the way you say it, Roy, like I was ignorant."

Roy reached out and placed his hand on top of Aaron's. "You're not ignorant, Aaron Long. I don't think of you that way and I never did. But I believe you think of yourself that way."

Aaron frowned, comprehension beginning, and nodded slowly. "Maybe so, Roy. You always been the educated one. Me, I barely finished tenth grade."

"You're the one with the common sense and you always were. That dam never would have worked, because I didn't know how to make it work. I only had an idea."

A smile began to touch Aaron's mouth. "Ya always was full of newfangled notions and no horse sense."

Roy nodded. "And that's the Lord's truth." He squeezed Aaron's hand.

Aaron's gaze rose and met Roy's.

Their gazes held for a long time, each slowly relaxing their protective barriers and allowing themselves and each other to see how they felt.

"I missed ya," Aaron said, his voice going thick.

"I missed you, too," Roy replied. "You know that I love you, Aaron."

"I ain't so sure about this love stuff," Aaron said, his gaze dropping to their clasped hands. He frowned. "You know how I like to fool 'round with the hands."

"I like to fool around, too." Roy sat back slightly. "Remember when we were kids and running wild with Cris? And sometimes, some other boy?

What's so different now? It didn't mean we cared about each other any less, did it? Aaron, I think you're the one who wants to be faithful and you doubt your ability to do it. All I'm saying is it isn't a requirement. My concern is where your heart is."

Aaron looked up, a light beginning to dawn. "Maybe you're right, Roy.

Maybe, maybe not." His eyes teared for a moment and his rugged, handsome face displayed an intense inner struggle. "I do love ya, Roy. Have ever since I kin remember. It jest don't seem right, somehow, two men lovin'

each other like this."

"Who's to tell us how we feel?" Roy said. "It's no one's business but ours. Listen to yourself, Aaron, and do what you want. What anyone else thinks is bullshit."

Aaron, raised in a loveless home, who'd longed for that special mutual expression all of his life, crumbled, his heart flaming. He felt like he was about to collapse. Tears rolled down his cheeks into his beard and a sob caught in his throat. Roy rose quickly and went to him, holding him very tightly. The sobs were intense and deep, but quickly over. His iron grip on Roy was intense and a passion burst from him like he'd never allowed before, and he began tearing at Roy's clothing.

They were quickly nude, their shirts torn, their jeans and boots and jockey shorts thrown wildly. Grasping each other desperately, they fell to the floor.

"Oh, God!" Aaron gasped. "It's horrible and wonderful!"

Aaron's loins burned with a hot, erotic fire. Sensuous, electric shocks raced through him. He planted a hard, full kiss on Roy's mouth. Their tongues touched and sparks seemed to explode within Aaron's brain.

Roy's long fingers slid between their writhing bodies and grasped Aaron's cock. Roy murmured against Aaron's ravaging mouth, his fingers working the big man's thick prick. A shudder of excitement racked his lean body.

"Ohhhhh," Aaron moaned.

His hot, wet tongue glided down Aaron's heaving chest, quickly licking the cockhead. Bolts of lust shot through Aaron. Roy opened his mouth and swirled his tongue around, down, under, over Aaron's cock. Moving his head from side to side, Roy took more and more cock into his mouth, sucking and licking.

When Aaron's cockhead pressed against the back of Roy's throat, Roy paused. He took a deep breath around Aaron's cock, pressed his lips around it, then shoved down. Aaron's cock slipped into his throat.

"Ahhhh!" Aaron gasped, his hands resting on Roy's head.

Pulling his head up, Roy let Aaron's cock slip from his mouth. It slapped wetly against Aaron's belly, glistening with spit. Roy's tongue ran over his lips, his blue eyes warm and large. His cock jerked up and down.

Aaron pulled Roy into his arms.

Roy's nipples were peaked, hard and sensitive. Aaron ran his palms over them, his gaze devouring the sight of his strong, slim body. Roy's cock arched upward, his balls hanging low and large between his thighs.

"It's been so long," Aaron groaned.

He bent down and captured Roy's cock in his mouth and began sucking with low, lust building movements of his head. His hands roamed over Roy's body as if trying to memorize every pore -- lean flanks, long muscular legs, flat almost hairless belly, strong chest. Aaron moved his mouth slowly, using his lips and tongue and hands on Roy's balls and crotch, building their mutual passion.

"Oh, God, Aaron," Roy murmured, his voice thick. He reached down and grasped Aaron's hair. He trembled as powerful, wonderful feelings flooded him. It was wonderful and it was awful, being in love, and he wouldn't change a thing for the world.

Writhing under Aaron's ministrations, Roy groaned. His nipples were extremely sensitive and becoming almost painfully so. His asshole began to tingle, to burn in that special way. He desired Aaron as he never desired him before. As Aaron licked his balls, Roy shivered, and his cock spasmed and oozed pre-cum.

"I'm burnin' up for ya, cowboy," Roy growled.

Aaron sucked Roy's balls gently, his tongue swirling over them. Roy shivered exquisitely, his hands moving from Aaron's head to his broad, muscular shoulders. Gooseflesh broke out on Roy's body when Aaron's hands caressed his ass.

When Aaron sat back on his heels, Roy rose quickly to his knees and threw his arms around him, pressing against him and emitting a cry of intense joy. Aaron ran his hands down Roy's back, touching the vee above his butt. Roy shivered and held Aaron tighter, arching his lower spine slightly and spreading his legs.

"Yes, yes," Roy whispered against Aaron's neck. "Fuck me, Aaron! Fuck me until I laugh or cry or go crazy, but fuck me now..."

Trembling, racked by powerful emotions, yet holding himself in check lest he ravage his mend, Aaron drew Roy into his arms and kissed him. They clung together a long time, Aaron's big hands caressing Roy's butt, their pulses beating faster and faster.

With a deep, rumbling groan, Roy slowly turned around and pulled a folding chair toward him. Leaning on the seat, he offered his ass to Aaron. Aaron's heart thumped so hard it was almost painful as he knelt behind Roy and smeared spit over his throbbing cock and slowly pushed into Roy's asshole.

"Ahhhhh!" Roy groaned, his body shaking.

Shoving gently, Aaron watched his cock slip into Roy's asshole, inch by inch, to the root. Roy's gasps of pleasure filled the room. They had both become acutely conscious of the length and thickness of Aaron's cock, of the warmth and gentle strength of Roy's pliable asshole, and of how the two seemed so extraordinarily complementary.

"Ohhhhh," Aaron groaned softly as he leaned forward and wrapped his arms around Roy, kissing Roy's shoulders and neck passionately.

Roy grasped the chair seat and shoved back, flexing his asshole. He trembled, gasping louder and longer. With Aaron's strong arms wrapped around him, with Aaron's cock throbbing deep in his asshole, Roy's spirit soared. The tremors rushing through his body increased in intensity when Aaron's fingers began rolling Roy's sensitive nipples. Then Aaron ran one hand slowly down and pressed against Roy's hard, flat belly. He gently began to fuck him.

With a steady, slow pace, Aaron moved his cock in and out of Roy's butthole, which was tight and flexible and increasingly hot. Aaron's cock seemed to swell and become even larger than it was before they began. The ass' natural juices had been secreted, and the movements of Aaron's cock were smooth.

Roy arched his back, shoving his butt against Aaron's gently thrusting cock and making his chest tense against Aaron's caressing fingers. Roy shivered, feeling light-headed, and wiggled his butt slightly as Aaron's thrust into him.

Wonderful, burning sensations exploded in Aaron's loins and, he moaned and trembled. "Roy," he rasped, his voice thick, "I do love you, I do, my man..."

"Aw, Aaron," Roy said softly, "Aaron, my lover, I've wanted to hear that for so long. Ah, yes, deep in me, Aaron, deep in me, eyes, like that."

Roy shivered and groaned as Aaron rotated his hips hard against Roy's butt.

Roy shoved beck a Aaron began stroking again, flexing his asshole gently, his lower spine arching rhythmically. Gasping, Aaron thrust into him, his pace increasing slightly. Aaron's hands moved down and gasped Roy's hips, his fingers digging into the flesh and thrust farther, harder. Their passion mounted and teetered on explosion.

"Oh, no!" Aaron exclaimed.

He was no longer able to keep control. He shoved into Roy and felt his cock spasm. He gasped, and thrust rapidly. Roy, sensing what was happening, writhed and shoved back. Aaron threw his head back as his climax ripped through him and his cum spurted. Roy cried out, trembling, and humped against Aaron's jerking cock and heaving belly. Showing deep, Aaron trembled and groaned, rotating his hips, as Roy's asshole flexed powerfully, seeming to milk him of every drop of cum.

Roy seemed to be in the throes of ecstasy. His cock spurted cum onto the floor as he humped against Aaron's thick, throbbing cock. His body was racked with tremors and a sob erupted from his throat, a sound of hap and triumph.

Astor pulled Roy up into his lap. Roy twisted his head around, tears running down his face. They kissed awkwardly, with a tender passion.

Aaron's hands caressed Roy's chest and belly, cock and balls and thighs, his tongue flicking into Roy's mouth.

Clumsily, Roy managed to get himself turned around and fully seated on Aaron's cock, which simply refused to go flaccid. Then, face to face, they embraced and kissed, straining their warm, tingling bodies against each other. Lips had never tasted so sweet. Flesh had never felt so wonderful. Cock-in-ass had never felt so exquisite.

"Roy," Aaron said thickly, "I ain't goin' soft."

"Good." Roy kissed him tenderly, longingly. "Let's do it again."

Aaron tightened his arms wound Roy's back and kissed him with all the yearning which welled up within him. Roy's asshole flexed gently around his cock, sending new sensations flashing through his groin. Aaron's mind was spinning, much of his world crumbling, but he didn't care. Whatever this love stuff was, it worked wonders. Slowly, their desire built, and it was much more intense than before, although less desperate, less urgent. They made love on the floor.

Two hours later, when they came down the stairs, they just nodded to Cris and Jud and walked out, leaving the sheriff and his new deputy openmouthed.

"What the hell happened up there?" Jud said to Cris. "I mean, what did you say to them?"

Cris shrugged, a bewildered expression on his face. "Damned if I know."

And when they returned to Bradley's to claim their separate vehicles and drove away, Bradley, Wade and Joe stared, open-mouthed.

"Well, I'll be damned," Bradley said, scratching his head.

Joe blinked and gulped, feeling strange emotions shooting through him, and a strange, unwelcome premonition. When he turned to look at Wade, he felt a jolt in his gut and a churning in his stomach he didn't like at all.

"I think I'm gonna pack the pipe," Bradley said, turning away. "What the hell did Cris say to those two?"

"Yeah, that's a good idea," Joe said, starting to follow Bradley. He looked back at Wade, who stood as if transfixed. "You comin'?"

Slowly, Wade turned toward Joe. But he didn't move. Instead, his gaze returned toward the now empty street were Aaron had followed Roy out of town. "Yeah, I'll be along in a minute, Joe."

Joe frowned, almost went to Wade, then turned and hurried after Bradley.

Wade blinked and sucked air between his teeth. His heart was thumping.

There was a strange warmth in his groin. When he'd first seen Roy and Aaron, he'd felt such a shock race through him and he'd thought, at first, that it was strictly sexual. What Roy and Aaron had had sex, there, was little doubt. Wade recognized that special body attitude which spelled clearly some highly satisfying sexual encounter.

It was that, but it was more, he sensed. There was some kind of eerie glow on their faces which seemed to come from deep within them.

He blinked away moisture which insisted on forming in his eyes. He swallowed hard, trying to rid his throat of an emotional lump. Oh damn, he thought, why am I wantin' to cry? He hadn't cried since his father died. The emotions welling up within him had no reference for him in his experience. They looked so beautiful.

"Hey, cowboy," Joe called from the door to Bradley's room. "C'mon in."

Wade turned slowly and started walking toward Joe. The afternoon sun was bright, bathing Joe in a warm, yellow glow. He paused, staring at his saddle buddy, feeling conflicting emotions race through him. His eyes misted again and that persistent lump swelled within his throat again. He gulped and blinked.

"Somethin' wrong, Wade, ole buddy?" Joe asked as Wade brushed past him.

"Somethin' in my eye," Wade muttered, wiping at them with his bandanna.

Bradley lit the pipe and passed it to Wade. Wade inhaled deeply and passed the pipe to Joe, avoiding the cowboy's curious gaze.

Then it became clear, crystal clear, to Wade and he gasped aloud.

"What's wrong with you, boy?" Joe said, handing the pipe back to Bradley.

"Aaron and Roy," he said. "Didn't ya see how they looked." Wade glanced at Joe and Bradley and realized that they hadn't seen what he had.

"They're in love."

Wade ignored Joe's and Bradley's reactions. So, he thought, that's what it looks like. That's what Roy was talkin' about. It is possible! It is real! Oh, God, I want some of that!

"Love!" Joe guffawed. "Of all the nonsense!"

Wade felt an incredible sadness sweep him momentarily. Oh, Joe, he thought, it ain't never gonna be you I love. I'm real sorry 'bout that

'cause you been good to me. But I'm gonna have me some of that.

THE END